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STATE OF ISRAEL

DOCUMENTS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ISRAEL 1958-1959

COMPANION VOLUME

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ISRAEL STATE ARCHIVES

DOCUMENTS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ISRAEL

VOLUME 13
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ENGLISH COMPANION VOLUME

FOREWORD

The present volume, covering the years 1958–1959, is the thirteenth in the series relating to the foreign policy of Israel. It is being issued before the volumes dealing with 1954–1957, which will appear in the course of the next few years. Like Vol. 14, which was published in 1997, the documents in this volume are not published in chronological sequence, but are grouped in chapters, each devoted to a particular subject. This arrangement has a great advantage since it allows the reader to follow a subject in order step by step; on the other hand, however, it has a serious drawback, since it removes the matter from the context of general and related events. It is advisable, therefore, to study each chapter together with other chapters that deal with related subjects. Thus it is recommended to read the chapter dealing with the crisis of July-August 1958 alongside the chapters devoted to Israel-U.S. relations and Israel-Britain relations, and so forth.

The documents appearing in this volume, like those in previous volumes, are merely a limited selection out of many thousands of documents dealing with the foreign relations of Israel. The fact that this volume covers two years impelled the editors to apply much stricter rules of selection. Evidently some subjects, which are not entirely devoid of importance, were eliminated altogether, while others were represented by a partial documentation only. The editors wish to stress however, that throughout the whole process of selecting and editing, they had unlimited access to the sources and no restrictions or limitations of a political nature have been imposed on them, with the exception of an injunction not to publish, in the chapter dealing with relations with the peripheral states, the name of a certain country in the Middle East that had relations with Israel at that time.

Most of the documents appearing in this volume come from the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept in the Israel State Archives. A number of documents come from the Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives and the Ben-Gurion Archives. The editors had also access to the stenographic minutes of the Israeli cabinet and information therefrom was included in the notes.

Arrangement of the documents. The documents have been divided into 18 chapters. The first one deals with the Middle East crisis in the summer of 1958, which necessitated the dispatch of British and American forces to Jordan and Lebanon. There follow chapters dealing with the vital problems of Israel, such as the situation on the borders, the water issue, freedom of navigation, and the Arab boycott. Then come relations with other countries in geographical order, beginning with the U.S. and ending with Israel's

attempts to consolidate its relations with Asian, African and Latin American countries. Two chapters deal with issues specific to this period: Israel's attempt to associate itself with the NATO countries and Israel's efforts to establish close relations with the peripheral countries as a counterbalance to the Arab states. One chapter deals with Israel's relations with the Vatican and another deals with the relations with the emerging European economic unions. The last chapter is devoted to relations with the Jewish world, in particular to the attempt to assist immigration from countries where Jews were in distress.

The text. The text printed in the Main Volume is that of the original document, except for the following editorial changes and emendations:

(a) Addresses of senders and addressees, as well as dates in their original form, have been deleted. In some of the reports, memoranda, and minutes, the original headings have also been omitted. The deleted information is incorporated in part in a standard format, in the heading supplied by the editors (see below), or in a note.

(b) A number of passages that are of a personal nature, of no direct relevance to foreign policy, or not relating to the subject of the chapter, have been omitted. In one case a document has been split into two, each part printed in a different chapter. All such changes and omissions are explained in the notes.

(c) Minor errors (slips of the pen, typographical errors, misspellings) have been corrected silently. No attempt has been made beyond that to correct style, syntax, and grammar.

(d) Common abbreviations and abbreviations whose meaning is not in doubt have been expanded to full form in square brackets on their first appearance in the document. Subsequently the abbreviations have been retained in the text. Abbreviations of proper names have always been expanded to full form in square brackets. However, abbreviations commonly pronounced as such and acronyms (e.g. U.N., I.D.F., U.S. etc.) have not been altered.

(e) Missing words have in some cases been added, either conjecturally (in square brackets) or on the basis of a parallel text of the same document (in square brackets and with an explanatory note).

(f) Original punctuation and capitalization, as well as British or American spellings, have been retained to the extent possible. Corrections have been made only in cases of obvious mistakes or to avoid misunderstanding. In telegrams, where the original punctuation is partial, the editors exercised much greater liberty in determining capitalization and punctuation.

(g) The outgoing text of telegrams has been used when extant.

Editorial headings. The heading includes the file reference of the document and the place of destination, except where the addressee is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or some other agency of the Government of Israel. The origin of the document and the date of its composition or transmission are given in standard format in the heading.

Editorial notes. These provide information on important events or developments and are numbered sequentially along with the documents. They precede the earliest document that contains a reference to the subject or appear according to the date on which the event took place.

Footnotes. The annotations consist mainly of numbered footnotes, explanatory notes, and cross-references, intended to illuminate topics that might otherwise be unclear and to indicate other documents that contain additional information. The cross-references are occasionally to files and documents that remain classified, on the assumption that they will eventually be made available to scholars.

Biographical information has been provided when necessary for a proper understanding of the text. Information on most persons mentioned in the text is provided in the index of persons.

Companion Volume. This companion volume consists of English summaries of the Hebrew documents, a translation of the editorial notes, footnotes, introduction and list of documents, and the indexes to the Main Volume.

Index and list of documents. A list of documents and editorial notes, indicating their main subject, appears at the beginning of the volume; two indexes—of persons and of topics and places—are at the end of this volume. References in the index are to document numbers.

We would like to thank all the individuals and institutions who helped in the preparation of this volume: Ambassador (retired) Moshe Raviv who, while Assistant Director-General for Information in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, initiated the co-option of veteran diplomats to assist in the editing of these volume; Ambassador (retired) Michael Elitzur, who read the manuscript and made many useful comments; veteran diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, too numerous to be mentioned by name, whom the editor consulted while editing this volume; Mrs. Michal Zur, the acting director of the Israel Defence and Military Establishment Archives and Mr. Uri Elgom, the retiring director, for their assistance in locating additional documentation; Dr. Tuvia Friling, for his assistance with material from the Ben-Gurion Archives; and the staff of the Israel State Archives and Keter Publishing Enterprises for their assistance in the preparation and printing of this volume.

INTRODUCTION

The years 1958, when Israel celebrated the tenth anniversary of its establishment, and 1959 were characterized by great apprehension at the strengthening of Egypt's military power under the leadership of Gamal Abd-ul-Nasser, with the active assistance of the Soviet Union. These apprehensions increased after 1 February 1958 when Egypt and Syria united to form the "United Arab Republic" (U.A.R.). Two weeks later, Iraq and Jordan also united. These two unions increased Israel's feeling of isolation, and, more importantly, the union between Iraq and Jordan brought to Israel's eastern border a country that had refused to sign an armistice agreement with it.

Under these circumstances the main thrust of Israeli diplomacy during these two years was its efforts to obtain security guarantees from the Western powers and to find increased sources for the purchase of arms. Furthermore, attempts were made, which were not successful, to find ways to affiliate with NATO.

The military coup in Baghdad on 14 July 1958, and its aftermath, were a threat to the governments of Jordan and Lebanon and led to the intervention of Great Britain and the United States of America. This stressed the importance of Israel as a stable source of support to the West. However, the fear of reactions by the Arab states resulted in partial response only to Israel's requests for arms.

More successful were Israel's attempts to break the wall of isolation surrounding it by increased contacts with the peripheral states (Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia), and with the newly independent states in Asia and Africa. These relations did not yield immediate results, nor lead to treaties or formal agreements with the peripheral countries, but they helped to improve Israel's international status.

Security was a great burden on Israel's economy, a burden that was somewhat relieved by the provision of various forms of financial assistance by the United States. On the other hand, Israel's attempts to affiliate with the economic unions that were established in Europe at that time were unsuccessful.

Israel's relations with the Diaspora during this period had their ups and downs. The tenth anniversary celebrations held in the spring of 1958 were an expression of identification of the Diaspora with Israel. But this did not help in resolving the problems and difficulties of communities in distress. The gates of the U.S.S.R. remained closed, even though both overt and clandestine efforts were made to strengthen ties with Soviet Jewry. These were years of intensified immigration of Jews from Romania (approximately

18,000 persons) and another 7,000 came from Poland. However, there was only a small trickle of immigrants from the other countries of Eastern Europe. The situation of the Jews of North Africa was difficult as they were caught in the vice of the political upheavals that occurred in these countries. Immigration was very restricted and there was concern in Israel for the Jews' property and security. This apprehension increased after Morocco and Tunisia joined the Arab League in October 1958.

Israel and the Middle East Crisis (July–August 1958)

At the beginning of 1958, the ruler of Egypt, Gamal Abd-ul-Nasser, whom Israel considered its most dangerous enemy, having recovered in 1957 from the defeat he had suffered the previous year in the Sinai Campaign, successfully brought about the union of Egypt and Syria and the establishment of the United Arab Republic on 1 February 1958. In reaction to this, Iraq and Jordan created (on 14 February) the Arab Union (or the Arab Federation). This body did not last long and collapsed when the military coup in Baghdad (on 14 July 1958) brought to an end the pro-West Hashemite regime in Iraq.

The 14 July coup raised fears in Israel and appeals were sent to the United States to put down the revolt and thus prevent the Middle East falling into the hands of Nasser and the Soviet Union. However, the United States refrained from taking action, giving various reasons: the absence of obvious resistance to the new regime by the Iraqi population or military forces, and fear of reaction by the Soviet Union. The United States and Britain did however assist the two countries that were in immediate danger: Lebanon and Jordan. Lebanon, where a form of civil war was taking place between supporters of Nasser (mainly Muslims) and his opponents (mainly Christians), requested assistance from the United States, which hurried to send a unit of Marines to Beirut on 15 July. King Hussein appealed to both the United States and Britain, and the latter asked Israel if it would object to British planes flying through its airspace, if the necessity arose to send aid to Jordan. The United States also sent a request to Israel to allow its planes to fly through Israel's airspace as a demonstration designed to serve as a warning against aggression.

While the United States' request was promptly agreed to, Israel found itself in a dilemma as to the British request. Although determined to prevent Nasserist domination of Jordan, Israel still had to take into consideration its lack of confidence in Britain arising from the experience of the recent past. Reactions of the opposition both in Britain and in Israel who did not support intervention in Jordan had to be considered as well as fears that the

countries of Africa and Asia would brand Israel as a collaborator with imperialism; and above all, apprehension of the reaction from the Soviet Union, whose threats against Israel during the Sinai Campaign had not been forgotten. Thus Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, who dealt with the crisis personally, replied to Britain that he would first have to put the request to his Cabinet. Prior to doing so, Ben-Gurion put three questions to the Americans:

a) Does the United States support the British request and wish Israel to reply in the affirmative?

b) Is there no other route by which to fly in the British forces?

c) Is the Jordanian government aware of the British request and does it wish Israel to reply in the affirmative?[1]

Following the United States' affirmative reply to its queries, the government of Israel granted permission (on 17 July) to transport 1,500 soldiers through Israeli airspace, on condition that Britain guarantee not to intervene if skirmishes were to break out on the border between Jordan and Israel.[2] On 18 July, the United States sent an urgent request to Israel to permit planes to fly petrol supplies to Jordan. Ben-Gurion replied that if there were no other alternative, the Americans could fly in the petrol without the prior agreement of Israel. He added that Israel might protest, and that would be the end of the matter.[3] Later the Americans requested permission to fly in supplies to the British forces in Jordan.

From the outset, the issue of the flights caused a series of misunderstandings between Britain and Israel. Permission had been granted for the transportation of 1,500 soldiers from Cyprus to Jordan, and Israel believed that this would end the affair. The British thought otherwise. It appears that they had begun flights through Israeli airspace even before Israel granted permission, and Britain continued to request permission for flights even after the 1,500 soldiers had been airlifted. This was in contrast to the hopes on the part of Israel that the British would find alternative routes such as transport by sea through Aqaba. Israel was also annoyed by the fact that, contrary to the Americans who kept the flights secret, the British made public the fact that the Israeli government had sanctioned their flights through Israeli airspace. On 20 July, Ben-Gurion sent a strong protest to the British Prime Minister demanding the immediate cessation of flights.[4] The British reacted by asking the Americans to use their influence with Israel, who in the end agreed to ignore the flights for another "few days".

1. See No. 4.
2. See No. 7.
3. See No. 8.
4. See No. 14.

Israel exploited the situation whereby Britain and the United States were in need of its assistance to submit requests regarding two matters vital to its security: security guarantees and the supply of arms. These issues were raised in meetings with the British Ambassador in Israel and by Eliahu Elath, Israeli Ambassador in London, with the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. Britain, which had lost its foothold in Iraq, still maintained many interests in the Arab Middle East and this prevented it from granting guarantees to Israel. However, Britain did partially accede to Israel's request for arms and agreed to sell it a number of items, mainly tanks and submarines. The matter of arms and security guarantees was raised by the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, Abba Eban, during his meeting on 22 July with Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles,[5] and again in a note sent by Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower (24 July).[6] Ben-Gurion stressed the dangers threatening the Middle East and the free world as a result of Nasser's subversion, with the support of the Soviet Union, and he described the efforts Israel was making to develop its relations with Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia in order to create a deterrent to the Soviet-Nasserist expansion. He requested that the United States support these efforts and inform the countries concerned that it approved this strengthening of ties with Israel. Regarding the supply of arms, Ben-Gurion wrote: "It is urgently essential to give Israel complete security as to the integrity of her borders, her sovereignty, and her capacity of self-defence." Eisenhower's reply was given on 25 July.[7] Referring to the United States' action in Lebanon, the President pointed out that: "that response reflected the assurances that had been given to nations of the Middle East and notably the provision of the Middle East Resolution of the United States Congress, that the independence and integrity of the nations of the Middle East are vital to world peace and the national interests." Eisenhower added that since the Middle East included Israel, Ben-Gurion could rest assured of United States interest in the integrity and independence of Israel.

As a supplement to this letter, the Secretary of State sent a letter (on 3 August) to Ben-Gurion,[8] which contained an undertaking by the United States to do everything in its power to enhance the relationships between Israel and those states mentioned in his letter to Eisenhower. The United States recognized that Israel should be in a position to deter an attempt at aggression by indigenous forces, and was prepared to examine the military implications of this problem with an open mind.

5. See No. 21.
6. See No. 27.
7. See No. 33.
8. See No. 37.

On 1 August 1958, an event occurred that Israel had feared: the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, V. Zorin, handed the Israeli Ambassador in Moscow a note of protest concerning the British and American flights through Israeli airspace.[9] The Soviet Union warned Israel that "by placing its airspace at the disposal of the United States and Britain, it was taking the responsibility of increasing tension in the Middle East, tension that could develop into a conflict with dangerous consequences for the national interests of Israel itself."

On the following day, 2 August, the British Ambassador submitted to Ben-Gurion a request for permission to fly an additional battalion into Jordan. Ben-Gurion refused that request and demanded the immediate cessation of flights, in consequence of the Soviet demand. At the same time, the United States ambassador was requested to transmit a similar message to Washington.

This step taken by Israel was met by a most severe reaction from the United States. Dulles told Eban that he attributed no importance to the British request to airlift an additional battalion, nor were the American flights an important issue. However, if the situation was such that the Israeli attitude could be changed instantly as the result of a letter from Moscow, then relations between the United States and Israel would change radically, and thus it would seem that the cooperation that had existed between the two countries was coming to an end. The deep impression that the President and he himself had received from the Prime Minister's letter was now being undermined. When Eban asked if he was authorized to inform his Prime Minister that if Israel were to be attacked by the Soviet Union, the United States would fight against it, Dulles replied "without the slightest doubt."[10]

In reply to Dulles' statement, Ben-Gurion sent a letter[11] (on 5 August) in which he protested that Israel had never been given an unequivocal guarantee of its integrity and was not aware that the Soviet Union had been given to understand that the result of an attack on Israel was comparable to an attack on Turkey. Israel was perturbed by the fact that it had not yet received arms from the United States. Ben-Gurion stated that he had noted Dulles' statement that in the event of a Soviet attack on Israel, United States' armed forces would come to its aid, but pointed out that this important message had never been given to Israel in writing. Ben-Gurion added that Israel had not yet replied to the Soviet note concerning the flights, and suggested that consultations be held in order to find a solution

9. See No. 38 and 39.
10. See No. 41 and Nos. 42 and 43.
11. See No. 49 and also *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. XIII, No. 36, pp. 85-87.

satisfactory to both sides. Dulles replied (on 10 August) that concerning Israel's fear for its security it appeared to him that in such matters the most important issue was the intentions and aims of other nations. He did not consider that the world at large, and the Soviet Union in particular, had any doubts as to the reaction of the United States in the event that the Soviet Union were to attack Israel.[12]

On 6 August, Ben-Gurion approved the continuation of American flights for a number of days and they finally ended on 10 August. The British request for flights was not approved and they found other routes, although from time to time approval was granted in exceptional cases.

Once the American flights had come to an end, Israel sent its reply (on 12 August) to the Soviet note.[13] Israel stressed that the British flights had been allowed for a restricted period, in accordance with a request from Jordan itself, in order to defend its independence against a threat of external attack. The Government of Israel was convinced that order and security could be maintained in the countries of the Middle East if the Soviet Union and other United Nations members used their influence "to preserve the United Nations principles...and prevent the threat of armed attacks...against the territorial integrity or political independence of every country in the Middle East." Furthermore, they should demand that the Arab states meet with Israel for direct negotiations toward a stable peace.

On 21 August, a resolution was passed at the emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly calling upon the secretary-general to take practical steps to arrange the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon and Jordan.[14] This resolution paved the way for the withdrawal of United States troops from Lebanon and British troops from Jordan which was completed in October 1958.

It soon became apparent that the new rulers of Iraq were not prepared to be subjugated to Nasser. The latter's efforts to gain control of Lebanon and Jordan failed utterly. In comparison with Nasser's failures, Israel secured a number of achievements arising out of the Middle East crisis: its relations with the United States improved to a great extent. Although Washington refrained from giving Israel public and written undertakings, important confidential messages were given verbally. Israel's requests for the provision of arms were not granted—apart from an exceptional case of the sale of 100 recoilless guns—but the United States assisted Israel in financing the purchase of tanks from Britain. Furthermore, relations between Israel and Britain improved, because of the latter's readiness to supply arms, especially

12. See No. 53.
13. See No. 54.
14. See No. 55 (Editorial Note).

tanks and submarines. Finally, the Middle East crisis encouraged Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia to strengthen their ties with Israel with the blessing of the United States. Israel emerged from these mainly clandestine relationships much stronger.

Israel and Arab Water Plans

In 1958 and 1959, Israel succeeded, although only partially, in reviving its water projects. It had not been able to accept the halting of its plans because of the vital importance it attributed to these water projects. As Ben-Gurion explained in his letter to Eban on 18 October 1953: "Without water there is no independence".[15]

In 1953, Israel had begun excavations south of the Benot Ya'aqov Bridge with the purpose of diverting the waters of the Jordan River to the Negev. In October of that year, Israel had been forced to suspend this work, which had been carried out in a demilitarized zone, after the Syrians submitted a complaint to the Security Council, and the United States supported the cessation of work. After that, President Eisenhower sent a special envoy, Eric Johnston, to carry out discussions with the countries contiguous to the Jordan-Yarmuk basin: Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, with the purpose of drawing up an agreed program for the division of the waters of these rivers between them. The talks continued from 1953 to 1955, following which Johnston completed his plan, the last version of which was submitted in 1956. Israel and Jordan expressed their agreement to the plan, but Syria and Lebanon did not consider themselves bound by it.

At this stage too, the United States applied pressure to Israel not to renew the work to the south of the Benot Yaacov Bridge, in the hope that it would succeed in persuading the countries concerned to implement the Johnston plan. As a substitute, the United States advised Israel to begin developing internal water resources. As it had no alternative, Israel agreed and in 1956 submitted a request to the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a loan of $75 million for this purpose. Since the reply was long in coming, Israel began working on the project in 1957 and financed it from its own resources.

The Export-Import Bank did not hurry to grant Israel's request because of its difficult economic situation at the time, and sent it to the State Department for consideration, to find out if there was any overriding political reason for granting the request. The State Department, which was

15. See Volume 8, No. 443.

apprehensive of the reaction of the Arab states, delayed its reply.[16] It was only after continuous pressure applied by Israel and its supporters in the United States that the bank approved (in early March 1958) a loan of a much smaller amount than that requested by Israel—only $24 million. However, before final arrangements for the loan could be made, the United States surprised Israel (at the end of February 1958) with the announcement of its decision to grant the Kingdom of Jordan's request for assistance to carry out its own water project.[17]

Israel decided to use this as an excuse to revive its plan to exploit the Jordan River, which, as stated above, had been suspended in October 1953. Israel's intention was to obtain the political "go-ahead" from the United States to renew the project as well as financial support to carry it out. Discussions about this were held throughout 1958 and 1959 in Washington and Jerusalem and notes were exchanged on the issue.

In a note dated 2 April 1958,[18] Israel protested against the support that the United States had given for the unilateral utilization of the Yarmuk River by the government of Jordan while Israel had not been guaranteed its share of this water as proposed in the Johnston Plan, and demanded that Jordan should adhere to the quota provided by this plan. Israel proposed that the United States should support its project, stating that Israel would be bound by two conditions: that it would not exploit more water than that allocated it by the Johnston Plan, and that the diversion of the waters would be carried out outside the demilitarized zone. The United States replied[19] that the Jordanian project was planned in such a manner that it could be integrated into an appropriate multinational project. Jordan had also promised the United States that it would not pump more water than had been allocated by the Johnston Plan. The United States agreed to grant aid in the future for Israeli water projects within the armistice borders that would not prejudice the coordinated development of the Jordan River. Its stand would depend on the nature of the projects proposed by Israel, Israel's needs for financial assistance, and the money available to the United States.

16. See No. 57.
17. This plan was known by the name of the "Eastern Ghor Project" (Ghor in Arabic meaning the Jordan Valley). The aim of this project was to enable water from the Yarmuk River to flow through a tunnel near the village of Adassiah to a canal running along the length of the Jordan Valley, from which water would run off in conduits to irrigate the fields. The canal supplied 180 million cubic metres, which irrigated 138,000 dunams. See Arnon Sofer, *Rivers of Fire* (Hebrew), pp. 156–157.
18. No. 64.
19. On 1 August 1959—see No. 65.

Following additional discussions and exchange of notes between the United States and Israel, the latter decided, in order to facilitate matters for the United States, to submit a plan called the "Central Israel Water Conduit". This would be a pipeline that would convey water from Western Galilee (which was not in dispute as was the Jordan River) southwards to the Negev and that in the course of time could convey water from the Jordan River as well. The Minister of Finance, Levi Eshkol, in a meeting with Under Secretary of State Dillon, submitted this proposal (on 1 October 1959). The reply to this was that the United States experts and engineers were still examining the matter.[20] This was followed by a tense conversation between Ambassador Harman and Secretary of State Herter (on 20 November) in which the Israeli ambassador complained that while the United States was aiding Jordan, Israel received only an exchange of correspondence and added an implied threat: "Under such conditions we will be forced to take the appropriate steps to guarantee our rights".[21] The breakthrough came on 22 October, following discussions between American and Israeli water experts. The Americans experts became convinced that there was no basis to the argument of the State Department that Israel's plan was not in keeping with the Johnston Plan.[22] There remained a number of secondary matters for clarification between the sides and after they had been brought to a successful conclusion, a meeting was held between Harman and Dillon on 8 January 1960, in which the latter stated that the State Department had no political reservations concerning the financing of the Central Conduit and that the American financial institutions could begin routine deliberations regarding Israel's request.[23]

The Arab states, which had closely followed developments in the deliberations on the water projects between the United States and Israel, set out to subvert Israel's plans. A number of ways to do this were proposed: military action or an engineering undertaking to divert the sources of the Jordan River in Syria and Lebanon, but up to the end of the period under review none of these plans were implemented.

Freedom of Navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat

In March 1959, the U.A.R. authorities changed the status quo that had existed in the Suez Canal since it was reopened in 1957 (and in effect since

20. See No. 76.
21. See No. 78, n. 5.
22. See No. 79.
23. See Volume 14, No. 115.

the establishment of the State of Israel) relating to the passage of Israeli goods and ships. Previously, vessels flying the Israeli flag and carrying Israeli goods defined as having strategic value were not permitted to pass through the Canal, but goods that were considered "non strategic" were allowed passage to and from Israel on condition that they were transported on non-Israeli ships.

The change was given expression by the detention in Port Said of the Liberian vessel *Capetan Manolis* (on 2 March) and the West German ship *Lealott* (on 17 March), both of which were carrying Israeli export goods to the Far East. The cargoes of these ships were unloaded and impounded, but permission was later granted to leave Port Said. On 21 March, the Danish ship *Inge Toft* was detained and when its captain refused to allow the cargoes to be unloaded was held in Port Said.

Israel brought the matter to the attention of the secretary-general of the United Nations and the State Department. As a result, the U.N. Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld went to Cairo (at the end of June) and at the beginning of July the outcome of his visit was explained to the Israeli representatives at the United Nations as follows:

The United Arab Republic had two stands on this issue, one official and public, which objected to the passage of Israeli vessels and goods through the Suez Canal. The other was practical and secret, according to which Israeli products would be allowed to pass through the Suez Canal on condition that they were transported on non-Israeli vessels, and that the export items were already under the ownership of the purchaser (conditions of f.o.b.) and import items were under the ownership of the vendor (conditions of c.i.f.). All this was on condition that this was a matter of "honest trade", that is, not for political needs and without publicity. At the same time, a similar message was given to the Israeli representatives in Washington, with the comment that the State Department considered this a good basis for an arrangement. Even though the negotiator in Cairo was U.N. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, the United States considered itself an interested party.[24]

This arrangement was not agreeable to Israel. It was difficult to maintain secrecy and to send goods to the Far East under f.o.b. conditions. Its requests for international support for the freedom of passage achieved poor results as reflected in addresses delivered at the session of the United Nations General Assembly. Hammarskjöld and the United States urged Israel to try the arrangement and after an exchange of letters with Hammarskjöld Israel decided to test it.

24. See Nos. 95, 96.

In December, the Greek vessel *Astypalea* left Haifa carrying a cargo of 400 tons of cement for a client in Asmara. The cargo was sent f.o.b. and the ship was under time charter by the purchaser. Israel placed a ban on publicity on the voyage but advised Hammarskjöld and the State Department of it and received their approval. Despite all this, the ship was detained in Port Said on 17 December. The efforts of Hammarskjöld and the United States to gain permission for the ship to continue on its way failed, and Israel therefore decided to terminate its silence.

On 22 December, the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Golda Meir, raised the matter in the Knesset in reply to motions for the agenda. She surveyed the issue of passage through the Canal and stressed the inability of the world community to maintain the principle of freedom of navigation. The main thrust of her speech was the arrangement reached by Hammarskjöld in Cairo, which she termed a manœuvre to deceive Israel's supporters and to create the appearance of moderation and willingness on the part of the U.A.R. to compromise and make arrangements regarding navigation. Since Israel was unable to convince friendly countries that no real arrangement existed, it had come to the conclusion that it should try to send a ship under the conditions and the method proposed by them. "In our struggle for freedom of navigation we decided to take this unconventional way".[25]

The issue of freedom of navigation remained unresolved in 1959 and ended in 1960 in failure for Israel, which was forced to forgo the use of the Suez Canal and develop the port of Eilat for trading with East Africa and the Far East.

The Arab Boycott of Israel

During 1958 and 1959, the Arab boycott against Israel continued, directed by the central bureau in Damascus and regional offices. The boycott constituted prohibition of investments, sale of strategic materials, transfer of know-how, and cooperation in enterprises. The world community failed to counteract the boycott activities for fear of negative influences on their relations with the Arab states. Even the United States followed this path, claiming in justification that every country has the right to control the commerce within its territory.[26] France stood idly by, arguing that this was a specifically commercial matter, when the government-owned motor company, Renault, yielded to the threat of the Arab boycott and abrogated

25. See No. 111 (Editorial Note).
26. See No. 116.

the agreement it had with the Israeli company Kaiser Frazer for the assembly of cars in Israel. Japan, which had widespread financial and commercial interests in the Arab states, yielded to the Arab boycott and the Arab demand not to maintain regular commercial ties with Israel—a demand not made of other countries.

While world Jewry assisted Israel to a certain extent through activities against the Arab boycott, after the expansion of the boycott in 1959 Israel reached the conclusion that it would have to depend on itself alone. To this end it was decided to establish within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a special division (Division for Political-Economic Planning) to deal with the Arab boycott. This department began to function in 1960.

The Arab boycott did not prevent Israel's economic development and did not strangle it financially; the main harm was the deterrent factor. Many companies avoided the forging of ties with Israel in the fields of commerce, investments, know-how, and patents.[27]

The Arab Refugee Problem

The special political committee of the 13th session of the United Nations General Assembly, dealt, as in previous years, with the issue of the Arab refugees. The deliberations were held while dealing with the annual report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and its budget. The discussions in 1958 were especially important since the mandate of the Relief and Works Agency was due to expire on 30 June 1960. It became apparent that Israel had become more flexible in its attitude to this issue and its representative, Ambassador Abba Eban, announced Israel's willingness to pay compensation to the refugees even before a permanent peace agreement was reached between Israel and the Arab states, but on two conditions:

a. The refugees would be rehabilitated in the Arab countries in which they were living.
b. Israel would be granted international aid for this purpose.

Eban stressed the point that at the time when the amount of compensation was determined, Israel's demands concerning the property Jews had left behind in the Arab states would also be taken into account.[28]

The representative of the United States (whose Congress considered UNRWA a bottomless pit and wished to liquidate it) stated that his

27. See No. 131.
28. See No. 132.

country did not wish to see the Agency continue in its present form, and a better method of solving the refugee problem should be found. The majority of the states supported prolongation of the Agency (in the absence of any other solution), but some of them advocated finding a more constructive approach. To this end it was resolved that the United Nations secretary general be instructed to study the problem anew and to present a report with his suggestions to the 14th session of the General Assembly.

The representatives of the Arab states objected both to Israel's proposals and to the cessation of the Agency's functions. They vehemently demanded the return of the refugees to their original places of residence in Israel, and even proposed the appointment of a custodian for the property of refugees in Israel.

Towards the end of the deliberations, the United States, together with Britain, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, drafted a resolution, an article of which, number 7, instructed the secretary-general to present to the next session of the General Assembly a report that would include proposals for the solution of the problem.[29] The Arabs vehemently objected to this too and were supported by Hammarskjöld. Thus the sponsors of the resolution were forced to withdraw article 7, and to make do with the secretary-general's statement that within the course of his duties he would examine the functioning of the Agency and would submit to the next session of the General Assembly a report that would contain suggestions as to how to resolve the deadlock.[30]

The Hammarskjöld report, published in June 1959.[31] recommended the continued existence of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency until the time the refugee problem was solved. For Israel, the importance of the report was that from it could be deduced, although it was not stated specifically, that the refugees should be integrated into the Arab states within the local population by means of normal economic processes.

The deliberations of the special political committee of the 14th session of the General Assembly began on 10 November 1959. Having learned its lesson from the failure of its initiative in the previous year, the United States waited for others to put forward proposals. These came in the form of proposals submitted by Pakistan and Indonesia, confirmed supporters of the Arabs, who proposed continuance of the Relief and Works Agency for an additional five years. The United States informed Israel on 26 November that it intended to propose amendments to the Pakistani-Indonesian

29. See No. 135.
30. See Nos. 137-138.
31. U.N. document A/4121, 15 June 1959.

proposal, including prolongation of the mandate for another two years only. A further amendment, most serious from Israel's point of view, called for the examination of means to be taken to enable the Palestine Conciliation Commission to carry out with greater efficiency the tasks given it by the United Nations Resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

Israel objected vehemently to the revival of the Conciliation Commission, and in keeping with directives from the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs, instructions were sent to the Israeli representatives to object strongly to the revival of the United Nations resolution passed in 1948. They were also to insist on the principles it had stated concerning the settlement of refugees in Arab states and the possibility of granting compensation, as set out by Eban the previous year. Furthermore, it was stated that Israel would object to the submission of any resolution referring to any issue other than that of the refugees, and that it would not cooperate with any United Nations institution required to deal with problems that were no longer relevant, such as Resolution 194 (III)[32] This resolution was the cause of conflict between Israel and the United States. In a conversation with the Israeli ambassador in Washington, Secretary of State Herter stated that some progress must be made, otherwise the Congress would not allocate monies to the refugees. He added that he was unable to understand Israel's fear of the Conciliation Commission, where "friends of Israel" were represented and which would not try to take any action apart from mediation, and that only concerning the refugees.[33]

On 9 December 1959 the General Assembly plenum passed an amended version of the Pakistani-Indonesian proposal, according to which the mandate of UNRWA would be extended for three years, however, after two years the matter would be re-examined, in keeping with the United States amendment. The resolution related only to article 11 of Resolution 194 (III) passed in 1948 (the article refers to the permission given to the refugees of 1948 to choose between return to their former places of residence or receiving monetary compensation). This resolution was given the number 1456 (XIV)[34] Eighty countries voted for the resolution and there were no against votes. Israel abstained and voted against the section relating to the Conciliation Commission.

32. See No. 145.
33. See No. 150.
34. See No. 152.

The Situation on the Borders

During the first half of 1958, Jordan continued its efforts to undermine Israel's status in the demilitarized zone on Mt. Scopus, which was an enclave within Jordanian territory. In January, the Colombian diplomat, Francisco Urrutia, was sent by the United Nations secretary-general to discuss the issue of Mt. Scopus with Israel and Jordan, following a crisis in November 1957, resulting from the Jordan's objection to the passage of an Israeli convoy carrying petrol up to the mountain[35] On 18 January 1958, Urrutia published his report which, while favourable to Israel, annoyed Jordan and was not to the liking of the United Nations. As a result, further United Nations envoys were sent to the region: Urrutia himself returned (in March–April), Ralph Bunche (in May), Andrew Cordier (during the first half of June) and Hammarskjöld himself (in the second half of June). They heard the representatives of Israel, led by Ben-Gurion, who stated that Mt. Scopus was not the main issue, but rather that Jordan should implement article VIII of the armistice agreement with Israel, and that this should be followed by implementation of all the clauses of the armistice agreement, leading to the signing of a peace agreement. Hammarskjöld proposed as a first step the establishment of a sub-commission to deal with matters concerning Mt. Scopus within the framework of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission. Israel agreed, but the proposal was not carried out because of Jordan's refusal.

Jordanian attacks ceased during the second half of 1958, as the result of the undermining of Jordan's situation following the Baghdad coup on 14 July and increased Nasserist subversion against it.

A number of serious incidents occurred along the Syrian border resulting from attacks by the Syrians on the Israeli development works and continued attempts to undermine Israeli control over the demilitarized zones. Three incidents should be mentioned:

1) At the end of March 1958, the Syrians attempted to prevent the digging of a drainage canal southeast of Lake Hula. They shelled settlements in the area and killed an Israeli civilian.

2) In December 1958, the Syrians killed a shepherd from Kibbutz Gonen and shelled the settlements.

3) On 23 January 1959 the Syrians killed a shepherd from Kibbutz Lahavot Habashan.

Israel submitted a complaint to the Security Council on the two latter counts, but the deliberations concluded without taking decisions.[36] During

35. See No. 181.

36. See No. 165 and No. 171, n. 4.

Hammarskjöld's visit to the region, December 1958-January 1959, he proposed marking the border between Israel and Syria as a method of preventing incidents. Israel agreed to mark the international boundary, but this was not implemented because of the objections of the United Arab Republic.

The other borders were more or less quiet during this period, although there were incidents of infiltration into Israeli air and sea space (including harassment of fishermen on Lake Tiberias), and infiltration for purposes of theft. The improvement in the situation along the Jordanian border enabled Israel to return to the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, from which it had withdrawn in 1956.[37]

Relations between Israel and the United States

As early as 1957, relations between Israel and the United States began to recover from damage caused by conflicts during the Suez Campaign. This process increased rapidly during 1958, following the military coup in Baghdad on 14 July. Based on his previous experience, Ben-Gurion immediately informed the United States of Britain's request to permit the airlift of troops and military supplies to Jordan through Israeli airspace. It was only after permission was forthcoming from Washington, that Ben-Gurion replied in the affirmative to the British request and even granted similar requests from the United States.

The crisis in the Middle East and the threats to Israel on the part of the ruler of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abd-ul-Nasser, who was considered by Israel at that time as her greatest enemy, were discussed in an exchange of notes between Ben-Gurion, Secretary of State Dulles and President Eisenhower.[38] A note from Dulles[39] to Ben-Gurion of 1 August 1958 stated, among other things, that the United States would consider Israel's request for arms "with an open mind".

Israel submitted to the State Department a list of arms it wished to obtain.[40] The American reaction was cautious. They agreed to supply 100 recoilless guns as well as a number of military items that could be purchased

37. See *Israel Government Year Book 5719* (1958), pp. 155-157, and *Israel Government Year Book 5720* (1959/1960), pp. 274-276.
38. Note from Ben-Gurion to the president of the United States of 24 July , see No. 27; for Eisenhower's reply of 25 July 1958, see No. 33.
39. Note from Dulles to Ben-Gurion of 1 August 1958, see No. 37.
40. See No. 208.

from commercial enterprises.[41] But they were careful not to depart radically at all from the traditional United States policy that arms should not be supplied to Israel because of the fear of harming relations between Washington and the Arab states. The United States also agreed to assist Israel indirectly to purchase Centurion tanks in Britain by increasing financial aid to Israel in the amount required for the purchase of these tanks—approximately $10 million.[42]

At the end of 1959, Israel had the feeling that the balance of power between it and the U.A.R. had deteriorated as a result of the mass of military equipment the U.A.R. had received during the previous three years, and that Israel's deterrent ability had been dangerously weakened. The matter was taken up at a meeting between the Israeli minister of foreign affairs and Secretary of State Herter on 29 September 1959. It was agreed that Israel would submit to the United States a note detailing its requirements for equipment needed to improve the situation.[43] The note detailing these requests, the most important of which was the supply of anti-aircraft missiles, submitted to the State Department on 9 February 1960, does not come within the period covered by this volume.[44]

Because of considerations concerning United States' relations with the Arab states, Israel's efforts to receive a public guarantee of its integrity and security from the United States were not successful. Israel received partial compensation from the replies by Eisenhower and Dulles to Ben-Gurion's note of 24 July 1958.[45] To this should be added the statement made by Dulles to Eban on 3 August 1958. In reply to Eban's question as to whether he was authorized to inform the prime minister that in the event that Israel were attacked by the Soviet Union, the United States would fight against the Soviet Union, Dulles replied: "without the slightest doubt".[46] Ben-Gurion replied in his note to Dulles that this important and lucid statement had not been conveyed to Israel in writing.[47] The United States, in fact, refrained from doing so, and Israel came to the conclusion that, instead of investing efforts to obtain overt or covert expressions of assistance in times of danger, a situation should be reached whereby the United States ensured that Israel had the arms it required.[48]

41. See ibid., and No. 213.
42. See No. 216.
43. See No. 241.
44. See Vol. 14, Nos. 128-129.
45. See notes 38-39 above.
46. See No. 42.
47. See *FRUS* 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 36.
48. See No. 236.

In April 1957, the United States expressed its readiness to renew the examination of the economic aid programs to Israel that had ceased in October 1956 at the outbreak of the Sinai Campaign. The embassy in Washington was active in political, financial, and public circles to obtain a maximum response to Israel's requests and under the most favourable possible conditions. The United States government felt a political and moral obligation to Israel, the world, and the American public to keep its promise that "Israel would have no reason to regret" its decision to withdraw from Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Israel explained to the United States that since it was not willing to grant Israel military aid, the United States should increase its economic assistance. But in the United States arguments were put forward to the effect that aid should be granted mainly to strengthen and "rescue" those countries on the verge of coming under Soviet influence. There were also those who stressed the disparity between the aid supplied to Israel and the Arab states. Although the apprehension of "what the Arabs would say" did not lead to denial or reduction of economic aid, it did result in a tendency to delay or obfuscate the publicity customary in such cases.

During the course of deliberations on economic matters, the Americans expressed their reservations regarding requests for aid for the absorption of immigrants on two levels: the political level—the reluctance of the United States government to appear before the Arabs as responsible for the encouragement of immigration of Jews, which would lead to "expansion", and secondly, on the economic level—the argument that Israel was undertaking a Sisyphean task—every time that American aid and other income brought Israel to the verge of economic stability, a new wave of immigration arrived and returned the Israeli economy to its previous situation.[49]

United States economic aid to Israel during the American fiscal year 1957-1958 was as follows:

- a loan in the amount of $24.5 million for irrigation and development of water sources;
- provision of surplus food in the amount of $41 million
- a loan from the Development Loan Fund in the amount of $15 million
- a grant in the amount of $7.5 million "special aid"
- technical assistance in the amount of $1.5 million.[50]

49. Note from Dulles to Ben-Gurion of 1 August 1958, see No. 37.
50. See *Israel Government Year Book*, 5719 (1958), p. 259.

In the fiscal year 1958-1959 Israel received the following aid:

- agricultural surplus in the amount of $38 million
- special aid in the amount of $7.5 million
- technical assistance in the amount of $1.9 million.[51]

The relationship of trust between Israel and the United States was expressed through consultations held on matters other than bilateral relations, such as the attitude toward Nasser, the issue of the United States joining the Baghdad Pact, the future of Jordan and Lebanon, etc. Of course, the United States did not always accept Israel's opinions.

As in previous years, during the two years under review, the United States was required to take a stand on various issues concerning the Israel-Arab conflict. Since the United States determined its attitude while taking into consideration its relations with the Arab states, Israel did not always gain satisfaction from Washington. Although the United States supported the freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal in principle, and even intervened in Cairo in an effort to bring about a change in the attitude of the U.A.R., it did not do so with the required resolve.[52] The same applied to the Arab boycott of Israel, when the United States maintained that every nation had the right to control the commerce within its boundaries.[53] Israel was disappointed at the non committal stand taken by the United States in the deliberations at the Security Council on two serious clashes on the Israeli-Syrian border in December 1958 and January 1959.[54] Israel was unpleasantly surprised, when during the deliberations at the 14th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the United States submitted an amendment to the resolution put forward by Indonesia and Pakistan that called for the examination of means by which the Palestine Conciliation Commission could more efficiently carry out the functions determined by the United Nations resolution of 11 December 1958, to which Israel had vehemently objected.[55]

The United States did not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and saw it as a "Corpus Separatum", as determined by the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947. Not only was its embassy situated in Tel Aviv—and still is—but it took steps behind the scenes to persuade countries that wished to open their embassy in Jerusalem to refrain from doing so.[56]

51. See *Israel Government Year Book*, 5720 (1959-1960), p. 276.
52. See Chapter 3.
53. See No. 116.
54. See No. 171 and n. 4.
55. See Nos. 149 and 150.
56. See Nos. 204, 229, 230, 231.

Israeli Relations with the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria

During 1958 and 1959, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) continued meticulously to implement the Reparations Agreement signed in 1952. Furthermore, the clandestine cooperation in security matters that began between the two countries in 1957 continued during the period under review. This cooperation was the cause of two government crises in Israel, the first during the second half of December 1957—not included in the period reviewed in this volume—and the second in June-July 1959.[57] However, relations between Israel and Germany did not suffer as a result of these crises.

Israel's efforts to establish diplomatic relations with West Germany during this period were not successful. After the signing of the Reparations Agreement, it was Chancellor Adenauer who proposed the forging of diplomatic relations with Israel, on the assumption that this would facilitate his country's integration into the world community. However, Ben-Gurion, who had guided relations between Israel and Germany from the outset, considered that the time had not yet come, since the Israeli public would not accept it.[58] Ben-Gurion later changed his attitude in the light of the strengthening of West Germany's status in Europe. Even without diplomatic ties with Israel, Germany had succeeded in resuming its place among the Western nations as well as becoming an influential factor in such bodies as NATO and the European Economic Community. This change was expressed by Ben-Gurion in his address to the Knesset on 1 July 1959, during the debate on the arms deal with Germany. "The Germany of Adenauer and the Social Democrats is not the Germany of Hitler...a Germany hostile to Israel...will jeopardize the friendship of other West European nations, and could adversely effect relations with the United States and other American states. It is a rising force...and its attitude towards us will influence to no small extent the attitude of other countries connected to it."[59]

However, at that time Germany was in no hurry to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. The Foreign Ministry in Bonn entertained the hope that Germany could serve as a bridgehead for the West to the Arab states, as opposed to Britain and France, who were still suffering from the aftermath

57. See No. 263.
58. See A. Ben-Nathan, "The Way to the establishment of Relations: the Israeli Aspect" in Normal Relations, *Israel-German Relations* (Hebrew), p. 24.
59. See Divrei Haknesset, 4th Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXVII, p. 2408.

of their invasion of Egypt in November 1956. West Germany was not suspected of imperialist intentions and did not have a history of colonialism in the Middle East. Influential leaders in the field of commerce and the economy in Germany preferred to do business with the Arab states, and were apprehensive of the results of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel. The German Foreign Ministry feared that ties with Israel would lead to the recognition and establishment of relations by the Arab states with the Democratic Republic of Germany (East Germany), a step that would require West Germany to break off relations with those states in keeping with the "Hallstein Doctrine".[60]

In the absence of diplomatic ties, relations between Israel and Germany were carried on through the Israeli reparations mission in Cologne, which was set up in consequence of the Reparations Agreement (the Luxembourg Agreement) with the purpose of ensuring its implementation. The mission was headed by Dr. Eliezer (Felix) Shinnar from its inception until it closed. The mission, which had diplomatic status, was subordinate to the minister of finance, and apart from a small consular section, there were no officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there.[61] Shinnar, who had the personal rank of ambassador, saw his role as head of the reparations mission as being his main task, and preferred to deal with economic rather than political matters. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials were concerned about this situation as the political importance of Germany grew, and as a partial panacea sent senior officials such as Reuven Shiloah and Maurice Fischer on short missions. Shiloah did not succeed in meeting with German officials, while Fischer met Adenauer on 17 July 1958 at the peak of the Middle East crisis, and outlined Israel's views on Nasserism and events in the Middle East.[62] During the course of the meeting, Fischer did not raise the issue of diplomatic relations, thus following Ben-Gurion's directive that the matter of diplomatic relations was not "urgent", but that Israel wished to attain cooperation in the economic and research areas.[63]

Nearly a year after Fischer's mission, the issue of establishing diplomatic relations was raised at a meeting between Chancellor Adenauer and Shinnar held on 21 May 1959.[64] The Chancellor promised the forging of ties after the

60 Called after Walter Hallstein, Secretary of State in the West German Foreign Ministry, who stated in 1958 that the Federal Republic of Germany would break off diplomatic relations with any country (apart from the Soviet Union) that recognized the German Democratic Republic. This rule applied until the end of the 1960s.

61. See Y. Meroz, *Was it All in Vain?* (Hebrew), p. 18.

62. See No. 248.

63. See No. 252, n. 10.

64. See No. 261.

elections to the fourth Knesset that were to take place on 3 November 1959, but this did not come about.

The question of compensation for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust continued to overshadow relations between Israel and Austria during the two years under review. The government in Vienna contended that it was the first country to be invaded by the Nazis and thus was a victim and not a partner responsible for their actions. Despite this approach, Austria was forced to make some modest gestures in this area and in 1959 allotted $6 million as compensation, a sum that was not seen by the survivors of the Holocaust as being adequate.

A positive aspect of Israel-Austria relations was the latter's agreement to allow immigrants from Eastern Europe to pass through its territory on their way to Israel.

Relations between Israel and France

The event that had the greatest influence on Israel's relations with France during the years 1958 and 1959, was the return to power of General Charles de Gaulle, first as prime minister (in June 1958) and later as president with broad powers (January 1959).

During the first half of 1958, relations with Israel continued as they had begun in 1955 and 1956, when ties between the security apparatus of the two countries were strengthened. These ties reached their peak in October 1956 when Israel joined with Britain and France in a military campaign against Egypt. During the years prior to the Sinai Campaign, and even after it, France was the main source of supply of arms to Israel, especially fighter planes and tanks. The confusion that existed in France during the twilight period of the Fourth Republic made it possible for Israeli military representatives to expand their activities in ways that were not always in keeping with official procedure. De Gaulle did not consider this proper and put an end to it. He even criticized it severely in his memoirs.[65]

The Israeli ambassador in France, Jacob Tsur, was of the opinion that the rise of de Gaulle to power would not create difficulties in the implementation of practical arrangements between the two countries, including the purchase of arms and nuclear cooperation. He proposed that

65. In his memoirs de Gaulle wrote: "Je mets un terme à d'abusives pratiques de collaboration établies sur le plan militaire, depuis l'expédition de Suez, entre Tel Aviv et Paris et qui introduisent en permanence des Israéliens à tous les échelons des états-majors et des services français." Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires d'espoir*, Vol. I, p. 279.

Israel should raise in its discussions with de Gaulle not only bi-lateral relations, but also global issues such as the policy of the West towards the Middle East, Israel's access to Europe, and its ties with countries in Asia and Africa. He considered the most suitable method would be a dialogue between the two heads of state, first a note from Ben-Gurion to de Gaulle to be followed by a meeting between them. However, Ben-Gurion preferred to wait.[66]

The events of the crisis in the Middle East (July–August 1958) soon proved Tsur to have been correct. On 26 July 1958, Ben-Gurion sent a note to de Gaulle explaining Israel's attitude to developments in the Middle East.[67] In August 1958, the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Golda Meir, arrived in Paris for a meeting with de Gaulle and Foreign Minister Couve de Murville. De Gaulle spoke encouragingly to his visitor stating: "...you may be assured that the concern of the Government of France is that Israel should continue to exist. It will continue to exist within the area of land that it controls and will continue its close relations with France.... What was carried out by previous governments for the benefit of Israel was good for Israel and good for France. The French people have not changed their opinion and this is also the attitude of the present government".[68] However, he warned against any wider interpretation of the visit of the Israeli minister of foreign affairs; and in a meeting with Ambassador Tsur (February 1959) stressed that care must be taken to prevent outward manifestations of friendly relations between the two countries. "Israel has its own interests, and France has its own interests. Thus France is not required unnecessarily to reveal its hostility toward the Arabs. It faces extremely difficult problems in North Africa. Thus it would be better not to speak out and not to place any burden on it".[69]

Although de Gaulle determined the foreign policy of his country, the day-to-day running of affairs was in the hands of his foreign minister, Maurice Couve de Murville. In contrast to his predecessor, Christian Pineau, he was not sympathetic toward Israel. He had served as French ambassador to Cairo and on taking up his duties as foreign minister he aimed to restore France's status in the Middle East, since all of the Arab states, apart from Lebanon, had broken off diplomatic relations with France in 1956, as a consequence of the Suez Campaign. The problem of Algeria was the obstacle to the resumption of diplomatic relations (which was made possible

66. See No. 271.
67. See Chapter 1, No. 32.
68. See No. 277.
69. See No. 282.

only after Algeria was granted independence in 1962). Couve de Murville's efforts met with partial success on 22 August 1958, when an agreement was signed between France and Egypt for economic, financial and cultural relations between the two countries. This agreement facilitated negotiations on the renewed activity of French schools in Egypt. It was also the excuse for the delay in signing an agreement for cultural ties between France and Israel that had been drawn up some time previously. This agreement was signed after a number of delays on 30 November 1959.

The French Foreign Ministry took no positive action when the government-owned Renault motor company, succumbed to the Arab boycott; and it refused to cooperate with Israel in development projects in French Africa. Israel was also disappointed by France's actions in the United Nations when France voted for the initiative to revive the Palestine Conciliation Commission. These negative actions towards Israel on the part of France were met with silence, since France was Israel's main supplier of arms. Furthermore, in the voting in the United Nations on issues important to France, such as the matter of Algeria and France's nuclear experiments in the Sahara desert, Israel supported France, despite the fact that these votes endangered Israel's status in Africa.

In September 1959, de Gaulle announced his willingness to grant independence to Algeria. Negotiations with the revolutionary leaders lasted another three years until independence was finally granted to Algeria in 1962. This made possible the renewal of diplomatic relations between France and the Arab states in the Middle East, and thus Israel lost an important asset in its relations with France.

Relations between Israel and Britain

At the beginning of 1958, the minister of foreign affairs defined Israel's relations with Britain as being psychologically complex: sympathy and respect bordering on reverence on the one hand, suspicion and even hostility on the other. The origin of this complex situation derives from the common history of the two countries.[70]

Since November 1955, relations had been adversely affected by the Guildhall speech of the then Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden who proposed the contraction of Israel's borders as the method of achieving peace with its Arab neighbours.[71]

70. See No. 298.
71. See ibid., n. 3.

The military coup in Baghdad on 14 July 1958 led to a considerable improvement in British-Israel relations, both as a result of the ousting of Nuri el-Sa'id, Britain's main ally in the Middle East as well as the central role played by Israel in the episode of the British overflights to Jordan. The minister of foreign affairs was invited to London (in August 1958) and heard from her British counterpart, Selwyn Lloyd, that the "Guildhall" episode was over and that the British would not initiate proposals for solutions to the problem of Israel and her neighbours.[72] During that visit an agreement in principle was reached to grant part of Israel's arms request, a matter that was central to British-Israel relations that year and also in 1959.

There were other factors, however, that caused Britain to have reservations regarding the improvement of relations with Israel, especially because of its desire to maintain its economic ties with the Arab states, and its efforts to rectify its relations with the U.A.R.

Israel's Relations with the Countries of Southern Europe

During 1958 and 1959, Italy followed a policy of caution towards Israel arising from its efforts to obtain the trust of the Arab states and to create a respected status for itself in the Middle East region. This derived not only from Italy's desire to become the intermediary between the Arabs and the West, but also from its aim to maintain its economic and cultural interests in that part of the world and as far as possible to expand them. Its reservations regarding Israel also stemmed from Italy's fear of Israel's association with the European economic organizations, which mean that it would have to compete with Israel in the sale of agricultural produce, especially citrus fruits.

Israel considered Italy to be an important state in the Mediterranean region. Evidence of this was the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Golda Meir, to Rome in August 1958, in the midst of the Middle East crisis, following on her visits to France and Britain. Furthermore, she invited Italian leaders to visit Israel,[73] visits that did not take place due to the instability of the Italian governments that led to constant changes in the leadership and because of fear of the reactions of the Arab states.

During 1958 and 1959, Israel's relations with the countries of southern Europe—Greece, Spain and Portugal—continued to be unsatisfactory.

The main obstacle to the development of relations between Israel and Greece was Athens' fear for the fate of its nationals in Egypt. As a result,

72. See Nos. 301 and 302.
73. See Nos. 324 and 329.

Greece refrained from extending to Israel de jure recognition. Nevertheless, ties developed between the two countries in the cultural, scientific, and economic fields. Greece also agreed to grant passage to immigrants to Israel, mainly from Eastern Europe, and to allow Israeli naval vessels to visit its ports.

There was a complete breach between Spain and Israel, both because of Spain's many interests in the Arab states and also because of Madrid's resentment of Israel for its votes at the United Nations in 1949 and 1950 against the proposal to repeal the 1946 resolution requiring the recall from Madrid of all heads of diplomatic missions (ambassadors and ministers). This resentment still continued even after Israel changed its policy and voted in December 1955 for the admission of Spain to the United Nations.[74]

Israel's relations with Portugal were on a unilateral consular basis from late 1958 and early 1959 (an Israeli consul-general in Lisbon and no Portuguese representation in Israel). The main deterrent to the forging of ties was Portugal's apprehension of Arab reaction during the deliberations at the United Nations regarding the fate of Portugal's colonies in Africa and Asia.[75]

Israel's Relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

Israel's relations with the Soviet Union during this period were almost completely at a standstill. Since the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union regarded Israel as totally committed to the Western bloc. The fact that Israel was not officially affiliated to any Western pact or organization was of no significance to the Russians or their allies. The Suez Campaign, in which Israel cooperated with Britain and France, was sufficient cause for the Soviet Union to have no doubt as to Israel's international orientation. The Soviet Union's policy concerning the Middle East, the thrust of which was to rely on Nasser, made it impossible to maintain relations on any acceptable basis. On the other hand, from Israel's point of view also the concept of mutual relations was one-dimensional. Everything was examined from the standpoint of the Jewish communities in these countries, their status, rights and especially the possibility of immigration to Israel. Under such circumstances no bi-lateral relations existed in the accepted meaning of the term. Apart from a chance meeting with Khrushchev,[76] no significant

74. See No. 331, n. 4.
75. See No. 333.
76. See No. 345.

political discussions were held with senior Soviet officials, and even the meeting at the intermediate level held in January 1958 between Ambassador Avidar and Deputy Foreign Minister Semionov, was of little benefit and full of polemic and ideological contention.[77] Israel attempted to take the initiative. In a meeting with the Soviet ambassador in Tel Aviv, at the height of the Middle East crisis, Ben-Gurion made a number of significant proposals for radical changes in relations between the countries. These included the supply of arms by the Soviet Union and that Russia should play an active role as an intermediary between Israel and the Arab states.[78] The ambassador replied that he would pass on the proposal to his superiors, but this initiative led to no response. Some two weeks later, the Soviet Union sent a sharp note to Israel regarding its support of British and American intervention in the Middle East.[79]

In the absence of any real contact, the Israeli representatives closely followed the activities and statements of the Soviet Union concerning the Middle East. Nasser's visit to Moscow in April-May 1958 aroused Israel's apprehension of a further deterioration in relations. The joint statement published at the end of the visit, in which the Palestinian refugees were, for the first time, described in an official Soviet document as having been "expelled from their homeland", and asserting that the governments of the Soviet Union and the U.A.R. fully supported the "legal rights of the Palestinian Arabs", was of the utmost concern to Israel. Israel also feared that, in addition to the public statement, Nasser had secretly received anti-Israeli assurances, such as Soviet support for reducing Israel's territory by the return to the 1947 borders. In the course of time, it became apparent that this fear was unfounded.[80]

As has been said, Israel's main concern in these countries was its ties with the Jewish communities. Throughout the entire period, representatives of an official Israeli organization—Nativ whose main purpose was contact with Soviet Jewry—operated within the Israeli embassy in Moscow. Their activities were innocent enough—dissemination of information, distribution of prayer books, and making contact with worshippers in the synagogues. These activities were closely observed by the Russians who accused the members of the Israeli embassy of deviation from diplomatic norms.[81] Israel itself was not convinced that these activities were beneficial nor how far they

77. See Nos. 340-342.
78. See No. 354.
79. See No. 38.
80. See Nos. 349-351.
81. See Nos. 355, 357.

should go. The general opinion was that they should be continued up to the point of a threat to close down the embassy, and to continue with public action in the countries of the West.[82]

Despite the lack of tangible relations between Israel and the Soviet Union, its satellites (apart from Czechoslovakia, whose relations with Israel lacked content) maintained cultural and commercial ties on a modest scale. Romania and Poland permitted the immigration to Israel of several thousand Jews.

Israel's Relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Israel's fears for its security following upon the strengthening of Egypt and Syria with the support of the Soviet Union, led to attempts by Israel to affiliate in some form or another with NATO. Efforts in this direction were made prior to the meeting of the NATO Council in Paris in December 1957. Israel set itself three aims:

a) To get NATO to adopt as official policy the idea that the military potential of the free world would be available to any state requiring it even if that state were not affiliated to any specific defense treaty.

b) To persuade NATO to declare that the strict preservation of the independence and integrity of the countries of the Middle East was a basic tenet of the treaty organization's policy, and that an attack on or threat against them would lead to reaction by NATO.

c) To bring the NATO Council meeting to authorize its political and military institutions to examine the possibility of relations and co-ordination with Israel.

Israeli representatives held meetings toward this end with the United States and the other NATO members, but to no avail. Some of the NATO countries, such as the United States and Britain, refused to accede to Israel's requests because of apprehension of the reaction of the Arab states. Other countries, such as Norway and Denmark, were not inclined to expand NATO and to add further burdens to it. But Israel was encouraged by the concluding statement of the NATO Council that took place in December 1957 to the effect that the security and sovereignty of the countries of the Middle East were vital to the security of the free world.[83] From then on

82. See Nos. 363, 364.
83. See No. 365.

matters concerning the Middle East were raised at nearly every NATO meeting and a special commission was established to plan NATO policy regarding the Middle East.[84] Israel came to the conclusion that its efforts should be directed to three areas: (1) The United States, (2) NATO's executive institutions, (3) Western Europe and Canada. At the beginning of 1958, a plan of action was drawn up that included the renewed demand that the United States find a suitable opportunity to warn the Soviet Union and its satellites against any attack on Israel; to call for discussions between the United States and Israel regarding defence arrangements; to provide military aid for the Israel Defence Forces; to make contacts with NATO headquarters and its general secretariat, and to expand its ties with security forces in Western Europe.[85] Not all the officials in Israel considered that these efforts would succeed. While waiting for the right moment, events brought crisis to the Middle East, beginning with the coup in Baghdad on 14 July 1958. Israel, which permitted Britain and the United States to use its airspace to fly troops and military supplies to Jordan, requested these two powers to grant it security guarantees and arms. Guarantees were not forthcoming, and the arms requests were only partially met. At all events, the issue of affiliation with NATO was held in abeyance and it was only in March 1959 that a decision was taken to revive it. The Israeli minister of foreign affairs raised the issue during her meetings in March with the French prime minister and foreign minister and with the Italian foreign minister. The French prime minister stated that it would be a waste of time to bring the matter before the NATO Council, and proposed that discussions be held with General Norstad and the NATO military institutions. The Italian foreign minister was not prepared to give a definite answer and only stated that he would consider the matter.[86] A meeting between Ambassador Elath and General Gale, Deputy Commander of NATO forces, did not lead to any positive results. In a letter he sent to Elath, he pointed out the political character of the problem and suggested that a friendly state or a number of NATO member states be sounded out.[87]

Another factor added to Israel's lack of success was the death of Reuven Shiloah in May 1959. He had been the prime mover of affiliation with NATO and apparently his death put an end to the matter.

84. See No. 372.
85. See No. 367.
86. See No. 374.
87. See No. 379.

Israel's Relations with the European Economic Organizations

Because of the character of the Israeli economy, and due to the constraints of the Arab boycott, the major part of Israel's foreign trade was with the countries of Western Europe (and the United States). It was for this reason that it was required to be on its guard against discrimination as a result of the organization of economic blocs in Western Europe. Thus, in April 1957, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Pinhas Sapir, appointed an inter-ministerial committee to examine the problems arising from the establishment of the "European Economic Community" also called the "Common Market"[88] and the establishment of a European free trade zone.[89] This committee decided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should sound out members of the O.E.E.C.[90] about their reaction to the possibility of some form of Israeli association with the organization.

Since Israel feared that the reluctance of the members of the O.E.E.C. to face a hostile Arab reaction would constitute an obstacle to its joining, it decided not to request to join, affiliate, or request observer status, but rather to be content with a request to establish a study team to find ways for

88. The official title: "The European Economic Community". The E.E.C. was established in 1957 with the main purpose of unifying customs levies, the gradual breaking down of customs barriers between member states, the gradual introduction of unified customs duties for imported goods; gradual introduction of a unified foreign trade policy, and the introduction of production and marketing arrangements for agricultural goods. The members were: France, West Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. The E.E.C. headquarters were in Brussels.
89. In 1956, O.E.E.C. members began to discuss an agreement to establish a free trade zone over a period of 15 years that would replace customs barriers between them and abolish import quotas. In 1959 it became apparent that this was not at all feasible, especially because of the disputes between Britain and France.
90. The Organization for European Economic Cooperation (O.E.E.C.) was founded in 1947 as an instrument for the implementation of the Marshall Plan providing economic assistance to the countries of Western Europe. During the course of time it developed into an independent body for economic cooperation between the countries of Europe. Its main aims were:

    a) The development of trade by removing quota barriers.

    b) The easing of transfer payments in foreign currency. For this purpose the European Payment Union was established in 1950 functioning up to the end of 1959 as a bank for dealing with balance of payments between countries and member nations.

    The members of the O.E.E.C. were: Austria, Denmark, France, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Britain, the German Federal Republic, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands. Spain joined in 1959. The organization's headquarters were in Paris.

economic cooperation and coordination of a foreign trade policy. However, after clarifications with the secretariat of the O.E.E.C., it was decided to skip this stage and to try to reach a multilateral agreement with those members of the O.E.E.C. interested in such an arrangement. Thus, in June 1958, Israel sent notes to 12 countries.[91] The majority replied in the affirmative, and in May 1959, talks were held between Israeli representatives and the heads of the O.E.E.C. at which it was decided that negotiations concerning ties with Israel would open in Paris at the end of June. However, the meeting was postponed because of Italy's fear of competition with Israel's agricultural produce, and of West Germany which feared that acceding to Israel's request would set a precedent for other countries. Once the obstacles had been overcome, negotiations took place between 23 September and 7 October 1959. Israel submitted a working paper on 21 October setting out the suggestions for the multilateral arrangements[92] and on 3 November the O.E.E.C. experts added their comments to this document.[93] In November 1959, Israel submitted a note proposing that the deliberations continue in Paris in January 1960.[94] These talks did not take place, since the members of the O.E.E.C., after having come to the conclusion that their organization had fulfilled its function, decided to dismantle it and establish a new organization in its place—together with the United States and Canada—by the name of the "Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (O.E.C.D.). In March 1960, Israel submitted a memorandum to the new organization expressing its desire to affiliate with it.[95]

Israel's efforts to join the Common Market increased with the approach of the date, 1 January 1959, when it was planned to begin functioning. In October 1958, Israel submitted a note to the Common Market and to its six members, in which it stated its support for the establishment of the new body and its desire to develop trade relations with its members. The note also expressed Israel's concern at the customs discrimination against Israeli goods—especially citrus fruits and products—with the setting of a unified customs tariff for all Market members toward third-party countries. Israel proposed beginning talks with the aim of examining how to prevent such

91. See No. 383. Israel sent notes to the following countries: Austria, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and Ireland. In July 1958 it sent a note to West Germany, and the number increased to 13. Because of Ireland's strong objection to ties with Israel, no further application was made to it and the number of countries reverted to 12.
92. See No. 397.
93. Ibid.
94. See No. 398.
95. See No. 400, n. 2.

discrimination.[96] In January 1959, Israel received the Market's response, that as regards claims by third-party states that could arise, a cautious stand must be taken "especially since these problems contain assumptions that have not yet been implemented, and thus it is difficult to deal with them seriously now if they wished to prevent arbitrariness and mistakes in trying to find solutions".[97] At the same time, they expressed their readiness to examine clarifications with Israeli representatives. On 21 April 1959, Israel received the Market's agreement to the accreditation of Gideon Rafael, Israeli Ambassador to Brussels, as its representative to the European Economic Community. This was a step toward the formalization of contacts. In the discussions held in Brussels in October 1959 between Israeli representatives and the Market, the parties reached the joint conclusion that "there is only one rapid and radical solution based on article 238 of the Common Market's agreement, which states that the community is authorized to forge restricted ties with a third state from the point of view of mutual privileges and liabilities".[98] Israel's efforts to forge ties with the European Economic Community continued in 1960.

In July 1959, an additional European economic organization was established—the European Free Trade Area (EFTA, also called the Seven)—but Israel did not take steps to join it, because its charter did not allow it to accept countries outside Europe.[99]

Relations between Israel and the Vatican

On 9 October 1958, Pope Pius XII died, and Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, who took the name John XXIII, was elected in his place.

The new Pope served during World War II as the Apostolic delegate in Turkey and assisted in the rescue of Jews persecuted by the Nazis. After the new Pope took office, the Vatican made a number of encouraging gestures toward Israel. An official Israeli delegation was invited to attend the Pope's investiture and the announcement of his taking up his duties was sent in an official note from John XXIII to the President of Israel, Izhak Ben-Zvi.

Israel interpreted this development as de facto recognition by the Vatican

96. See No. 384.
97. See No. 386.
98. See No. 396.
99. The members of this organization (Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Portugal, Austria, and Switzerland) annulled the trade barriers between each of them, but its members maintained the right to retain their own customs tariffs towards other countries.

and endeavored to improve its relations with that state. The task was given to the Assistant Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maurice Fischer, who was well acquainted with John XXIII from the period of their service in Paris at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s.

Fischer met with the Pope in February 1959 and the latter granted the two requests Fischer submitted to him, namely: the appointment of an Apostolic Vicar to Israel, and the establishment of political contacts between the Vatican and Israel through talks between Fischer and members of the Vatican's Secretariat of State. Fischer explained the change in attitude of the church as resulting from disappointment within the Catholic Church with attempts to build closer relationships with the Arab states, as well as the new Pope's personality.[100]

Less successful was Fischer's meeting with the Secretary of State Domenico Tardini who complained against Israel's attitude first to the internationalization of Jerusalem and second, in the matter of Christian women married to Jews, and their children. Tardini said that the Vatican demanded implementation of the United Nations resolution calling for the internationalization of Jerusalem and explained to Fischer that the creation of the Apostolic Vicarage should not be construed as the establishment of diplomatic relations, "for which the time has not yet come nor is the need for them felt". He said that despite this, Fischer would always be welcome at the Secretariat of State and added that there had been a definite improvement in the attitude of the Vatican to the State of Israel since October 1958. He requested that developments in relations between the Vatican and Israel should not be made public.[101]

However, Fischer's next two visits to Rome were disappointing. During his second visit (April–May 1959) which he defined as "deplorable",[102] he was received only by a minor church official who read out a memorandum that denigrated Israel and which Fischer refused to accept. During his third visit (October 1959) he was received by the Deputy Secretary of State, Antonio Samore, who advised him to reduce the frequency of his visits, remarking that "the U.A.R. watched this with the greatest attention".[103]

It became apparent that during this period two different attitudes toward Israel existed at the Vatican: the moral-emotional attitude of the Pope that advocated moving closer to Israel, as against Tardini's political approach,

100. See No. 405. Bishop Pier Giorgio Chiappero arrived in Israel in December 1959.
101. See No. 405.
102. See No. 406, n. 5.
103. See No. 406.

which insisted on maximum caution in relations with Israel because of concern for the safety of the Vatican's institutions in the Arab states. The Arab diplomatic corps accredited to the Vatican supported Tardini's attitude, having succeeded in creating the impression that a relationship with Israel would cause difficulties for the Catholic communities and their institutions in the Arab countries. In the struggle between the two approaches, Tardini had the upper hand. Up to the end of 1959 no concessions were forthcoming apart from the Pope's positive reaction to Fischer's two requests made in February 1959.[104]

Israel's Relations with the Countries of the Periphery

During 1958 and 1959, Israel continued the efforts begun in 1957 to strengthen its ties with Iran, Turkey and Ethiopia. This initiative received an impetus as the result of the military coup in Baghdad on 14 July 1958, which brought to an end the branch of the Hashemite dynasty that had ruled Iraq and eliminated one of the strongest outposts of the West in the Arab world. Israel requested—and received—the support of the United States in these efforts.[105]

Like Israel, these three countries feared Nasser's subversive tactics that were supported by the Soviet Union. The relationship that Israel developed with these countries was called the "Peripheral Entente", in itself a misnomer since no formal treaty had been signed and mutual contacts were generally made between Israel and each of the countries on an individual basis. Strong ties had been developed with them in the political, economic, and security areas, most of which were carried out clandestinely. Naturally, in addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other government bodies were involved in these matters and thus the documentation in this chapter does not encompass the full range of activity that took place during the period under review.

Despite the intimacy of the contacts with these countries, there were problems with Israel's formal relations with them. Turkey, which had granted Israel de jure recognition in March 1950 and established full diplomatic ties at ministerial level, recalled its minister from Israel and

104. It should be pointed out that in 1959 the Pope made a positive gesture towards the Jewish people when he omitted from his sermon on Good Friday the word "treacherous" from the traditional version "Let us pray for the treacherous Jews". (See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Research Division summary of 13 April 1959, file 130.23/3102/27.)

105. See No. 431.

appointed a chargé d'affaires at the head of its legation in Tel Aviv as a result of strong pressure exerted by Iraq, its ally in the Baghdad pact. Israel reluctantly made a parallel step.[106]

Iran recognized Israel de facto in March 1950 and opened a low-level mission but refused to allow Israel to do the same. In July 1951, the mission in Israel was closed, but the de facto recognition remained in force. In 1956, Israel opened an unofficial office in Teheran under the guise of a trade mission.

Ethiopia also recognized Israel de facto only. In 1956, Israel was permitted to open a consulate general in Addis Ababa and it was agreed that until formal diplomatic relations were entered into, the consulate general in Addis Ababa and the Ethiopian consulate general in Jerusalem (a remnant from Mandatory times) would function as diplomatic missions with certain powers.[107]

At the end of 1957, Israel began to take steps to improve its relations with Turkey, which had reached their lowest ebb at the end of 1956. The Israel ambassador in Rome, Eliahu Sasson, who had been minister to Ankara during 1950–1953, met the Turkish Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes in Paris, and succeeded in moderating Turkey's stand on the Israel–Arab conflict at the conference of NATO Prime Ministers that was taking place at the time.[108] Further contacts followed: in June-July a meeting took place in Rome of experts on the Middle East from both countries; in August the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Golda Meir, met her Turkish counterpart, F. Zorlu in Zurich. The climax was the secret meeting in Ankara on 29 August 1958 between Ben-Gurion and Turkey's prime minister, at which it was agreed that the anti-Nasserist forces in the Middle East should unite with the support of the Western powers led by the United States and that cooperation in the political, security, and economic spheres be strengthened. A decision was also taken to exchange ambassadors "soon".[109] This cooperation was quickly put to the test when it became apparent, at the end of 1958 and the beginning of 1959, that in Washington and in other Western

106. The Baghdad pact brought about a deterioration in the relations between Israel and Turkey from the time it was signed on 24 February 1955. Israel considered with the greatest gravity the exchange of letters between the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Iraq, which were appended to the text of the pact, according to which the two states undertook to implement all the United Nations resolutions concerning Palestine. Turkey held a grudge against Israel because it believed that the United States refused to join the Baghdad pact in consideration of Israel's attitude.

107. See No. 434, n. 3.

108. See No. 408, n. 2.

109. See Nos. 428 and 429.

capitals, there was a growing tendency to placate Nasser, as well as to strengthen him in the struggle against Qassim of Iraq. In the capitals of the peripheral states, Israel found a willingness to listen to its arguments.[110] This did not apply to the issue of exchange of ambassadors, which the Turkish authorities rejected, at first with the argument that they wished to wait until the deliberations at the United Nations on the issue of Cyprus came to an end, and then that "the matter of ambassadors was no more than a demonstration. The deciding factors are friendly relations in the areas of defence and cooperation. Is the basis for cooperation so feeble that an external matter such as an embassy would harm it?"[111] In October 1959, the Turkish Prime Minister, Adnan Menderes, stated that the delay was bound up with the situation in Iraq and that radical groups in that country would exploit the exchange of ambassadors to drive a wedge between Qassim and Turkey.[112]

Concerning diplomatic relations with Iran, Israel decided to ignore the formal defect since it calculated that there was no guarantee that in the near future Iran would agree to progress in this area. Thus, it agreed to Iran's proposal that Switzerland would represent it in Israel. At the end of 1959, an Iranian diplomat arrived in Israel to take up his duties within the Swiss embassy in Tel Aviv.

The events of 1958 justified Israel's prognosis, because Iran was interested in maintaining good relations with Qassim, the new ruler of Iraq, believing that he would be able to subdue the communists in his country, and thus deserved to be helped and protected from further difficulties, "including not annoying him in field of relations between Iran and Israel".[113] It was to this end that Israel took action to stress the practical aspects of its relations with Iran, and these efforts met with success. The breaking of the blockade in the Tiran Straits as the result of the Sinai Campaign, made possible increased economic ties with Iran through the institution of shipping lines between the port of Eilat and ports in the Persian Gulf. Iran became a supplier of oil to Israel, despite the protests of the Arab states. In February 1958, the first Israeli minister visited Iran. This was Pinhas Sapir, minister of commerce and industry, who stopped off in Teheran on his way to the Far East and met with his Iranian counterpart. The purpose of this visit was to interest the Iranians in the laying of an oil pipeline from Eilat to the oil refineries in Haifa. He also explained the

110. See Nos. 440 and 442.
111. See No. 440.
112. See No. 453.
113. See No. 439.

possibilities of trade between the two countries. Sapir was given a very warm welcome but the meetings were more informative than practical.[114]

In August 1959, the Israeli airline El Al opened a regular service between Lod and Teheran. Iran rejected the protests raised by the Arab states against the strengthening of its economic ties with Israel, arguing that Iran was unable and unwilling to prevent economic initiatives that benefited the development of its economy. Nor did it accept the right of the Arab states to protest, so long as these activities were not directed against them.[115] At the end of 1959, Iran allowed Israel to post a military attaché to the Israeli mission in Teheran.[116]

Ethiopia, whose relations with Israel improved during the period under review, especially in the economic area, disappointed Israel regarding the matter of formal relations. This was because of considerations regarding its connections with two Arab countries—the U.A.R. and Sudan, as well as its problems with Somalia.[117] Israel had hoped that a meeting between the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, and the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Golda Meir, would lead to solution to the problem. However, the meeting that was to have taken place in Paris in July 1959 was prevented by the French authorities on formal grounds.[118] At the end of 1959, Ethiopia came somewhat closer to Israel when it appointed an official with the rank of minister to the post of consul-general in Jerusalem.

Israel's Relations with the Countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America

In 1958 and 1959, the struggle continued between Israel and the Arab states over contacts with Asia, and the Arabs had the upper hand in the three most important countries of the continent: Japan, China, and India.

Because of Japan's numerous economic and commercial interests in the Arab world and its apprehensions of the adverse effect of the Arab boycott, there was almost no practical content to its relations with Israel, especially as it did not require technical assistance from Israel, an important factor in Israel's contacts with other countries in Asia.

In February 1958, the Israeli Minister of Commerce and Industry, Pinhas Sapir, visited Japan in the course of a tour of the Far East and Australia. He

114. See No. 411.
115. See No. 452.
116. See J. Tsur to Sh. Bentsur, 18 December 1959, 130.15/3748/10.
117. See No. 451.
118. See No. 448 and 449.

signed an agreement for the purchase of tankers and industrial equipment, and because of the fear of Arab pressure the Japanese decided to conceal it. Sapir made a second visit in October 1959 to attend the GATT conference. He met with the foreign minister and the minister of trade and was pleased to hear from them that they considered positively the development of economic ties between the two countries. Mordechai Bentov, the minister of development, also visited Japan in May 1959. The visit was described as being for the purpose of gaining a direct impression of the situation in Japan and the possibilities of economic cooperation. During the course of the visit political issues were not discussed. Japan refrained from any outward manifestations of friendship with Israel—such as raising the level of the diplomatic representation from legation to embassy.

The Arab states viewed India as a key state of the first importance and the pressure they exerted to curb Israel's connections there was greater than in any other country in Asia. Israel was represented from 1953 by a consul in Bombay whose main task was dissemination of information, but he often visited New Delhi for consultations at the Ministry of External Affairs with various Indian officials. India did not have any representation in Israel. In October 1958, the Israeli Minister of Finance, Levi Eshkol, visited India for conventions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He met with his Indian counterpart, M. Desai, but their talks had no practical outcome. Minister of Development Bentov's meeting with Nehru during the course of his unofficial visit to India in May 1959 met with the same fate. Israel came to the conclusion that in the meantime there was no point in raising the issue of diplomatic relations with India.[119]

Israel had no contact whatsoever with the People's Republic of China. The same applied to the Muslim states in Asia: Pakistan,[120] Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Malaya.[121]

Thailand took a neutral stand regarding the Arab-Israel conflict and was not influenced by the inclinations of the other members of the Afro-Asian

119. See No. 493.

120. Pakistan refused to extend visas to Israeli delegates to attend the Interpol conference and the conference of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). These two conferences were to take place in Karachi in December 1959. The outcome of the Pakistani refusal was that the first conference was transferred to Paris and the second to Bangkok.

121. Contacts between Israel and Malaya began in 1956, during the visit of Moshe Sharett. In November 1959, the Malayan prime minister informed the Israeli minister in Australia, during the course of the prime minister's visit there, that due to the "Muslim masses" in his country he was unable to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. See No. 489.

bloc. In August 1958, an Israeli resident ambassador began to serve in Bangkok and Thailand's ambassador to Rome was accredited to Israel.

In 1958, Israel enlarged the framework of its legations throughout Asia by opening legations headed by chargés d'affaires in the Philippines and Ceylon, with the ambassador in Rangoon serving as non-resident minister in both countries. Both countries accredited their ambassadors in Rome as non-resident Ministers in Israel. Ceylon delayed the presentation of the credentials of its Minister for some time and did so only in December 1959—the reason being considerations of Arab pressure.

In January 1959, delegations from Cambodia and South Vietnam visited Israel. The primary purpose of the Cambodian visit, led by their minister in Paris, was a survey of the subject of development. Following the visit, it was agreed to establish diplomatic ties between Cambodia and Israel, but this was not implemented during the period under review. A South Vietnamese mission came to Israel to conduct a survey of irrigation and trade possibilities. In May 1959, the Israeli ambassador in Burma, Daniel Lewin, visited South Vietnam and discussed with the president and the foreign minister the issue of establishing diplomatic relations. He proposed as a first step relations at consular level. He was told that it would be preferable to effect practical ties and only after these were functioning, would diplomatic relations follow.

Israel decided "for the moment" not to have ties with South Korea.

The strongest foothold Israel succeeded in obtaining in Asia was in Burma, and relations with that state served as a model for other countries in both Asia and Africa. U Nu, the Burmese prime minister—the first serving prime minister to pay an official visit to Israel (June 1955)—played a decisive role in developing these relations. His resignation from government in September 1958 did not adversely affect Burma–Israel relations. In March 1958, the Israeli Minister of Industry and Commerce, Pinhas Sapir, visited Burma to examine the possibilities of expanding economic and industrial cooperation between the two states. In November 1958, a group of Burmese ex-servicemen visited Israel with their families in order to gain experience in the fields of settlement and agriculture with the aim of settling along the border between Burma and China. In March 1959, an agreement was signed between the government of Burma and Solel Boneh for the establishment of a joint construction company. During that same month, the Burma Five Stars Line, a shipping company jointly owned by the Burmese government and the Israeli government shipping company Zim was established and was mainly involved in the transport of cargoes between Burma and Japan. In June 1959, the prime minister of Burma, General Ne Win, paid an official visit to Israel and the President of Israel, Izhak Ben-Zvi made an official visit to Burma in October 1959.

During the two years under review, Burmese students continued to come to Israel to participate in various courses and Israeli experts were sent to Burma. Despite the extensive practical contents of the relations between Burma and Israel, over the years the special relationship declined and the relations became normal and regular.[122]

Africa

Israel's activities on the African continent, which had begun at the end of 1956, expanded during the years 1958 and 1959, at the time the decolonization of Africa was in process. Consulates were opened in Accra and Addis Ababa.[123]

Israel wished to prevent the new states in Africa from forging strong ties with the Arab states, by exploiting the fear most of them had of Egypt. The economic ties Israel had with the developing nations played an important role in this. Israel endeavored to gain an understanding of the problems of those states on the verge of independence and began making contacts with their leaders while they were still under colonial rule. This was the reason that the visit of the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Golda Meir, to West Africa, in March 1958, included not only independent states such as Ghana and Liberia, but also the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Nigeria. In June-July 1958, a mission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited East Africa, an area considered important because of its proximity to Israel and to Egypt. The Israel Ambassador in Belgium, Gideon Rafael, visited the Belgian Congo in July-August 1959.

The strongest ties Israel succeeded in developing in Africa were with Ghana, and its ambassador in Accra dealt with matters in neighbouring countries (Liberia, Guinea, Nigeria, etc.) until Israel appointed resident ambassadors. The mutual relations that developed between Ghana and Israel served as a model for ties between Israel and other states in Africa. The ties with Ghana were construed as the beginning of political relations with additional African states, which would help Israel overcome its isolation in the world community and neutralize the hostile influence of the Arab states.

It was the personality of Ghana's ruler, Kwame Nkrumah, that during its

122. See S. Avimor (ed.), *Relations Between Israel and Asian and African States*, No. 5, Union of Burma, pp. 7-8.

123. Israel's ties with Ethiopia developed differently from those with the other African states. See the Chapter 16.

first years determined the character of relations with Israel. Since he advocated pan-Africanism as well as a non-alignment policy and aspired to play an active role in the Third World, he took stands on multilateral issues that were not always pleasing to Israel (such as on the refugees and freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal).[124] In general, however, relations were positive concerning bi-lateral issues: students from Ghana participated in courses in various topics in Israel and Israeli experts were sent to Ghana. In July 1958, an Israeli was appointed commander of Ghana's training school for merchant navy officers and during that month a trade agreement between the two countries was signed. A school for training air force officers with Israeli instructors was opened in September 1959.

Israel and Liberia exchanged resident ambassadors in their respective countries in 1958. A friendship agreement between the countries was signed on 9 April 1959. In September 1959, Liberia was the only country among Israel's supporters in Africa (and in Asia) to express its support for freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal at the 14th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Israel did not hurry to forge diplomatic ties with Guinea when it abruptly became independent by breaking away from French control in 1958, both out of consideration for its relations with France and for budgetary reasons. Israel's first Ambassador, Shlomo Hillel, did not arrive in Conakry until August 1959 and he gained the impression that Israel had been tardy in reaching this country and that if it continued to hesitate, others would take its place. He reported that in Guinea there were three elements working against Israel: the East European bloc, which was well entrenched (this bloc had understood that Guinea provided an opportunity to attain a bridgehead to West Africa, an area previously closed to it), the Arabs, who found fertile ground for their activities in this Muslim state, and Guinea's lack of stability. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs considered that it would not be possible to make great headway in Guinea but decided to make a special effort to accede to its requests for experts and trainees from Israel.[125] It was only in February 1960 that a ten-member delegation came to Israel to study agricultural cooperation.

Israel devoted special attention to its relations with Nigeria, the most populous African country—approximately 40 million inhabitants at that time, about half of whom were Muslims. Ties with Nigeria began even prior to its independence (granted in October 1960). In March 1958, the Israeli minister of foreign affairs visited the country, but the British government

124. See H. Einor (ed.), *Relations between Israel and Asian and African States*, No. 4, Ghana, p. 2.

125. See No. 485.

refused to allow Israel to open a consulate in Lagos because it feared that Egypt would make a similar request. It also feared the reaction of the Muslim dominated northern section of Nigeria. As an alternative, from time to time Israel sent visiting diplomats from its embassy in Ghana, and also stationed a diplomat in Lagos under the cover of a representative of the Solel Boneh Construction Company. Israel succeeded in establishing joint companies in the eastern and western sectors of Nigeria, the majority of whose shares were held by the regional governments and the minority by Solel Boneh (building projects), Tahal, and W.R.D. (Water Resources Development). Prominent personalities from Nigeria visited Israel, and Nigerians also participated in training courses, but none of them were from the northern, mainly Muslim sector of the country which was closed to Israel.

Israel's fervent desire to strengthen its ties with the newly independent nations of Africa, and those on the verge of becoming independent, did not prevent it from continuing its ties with their greatest adversary—South Africa. The reason for this was twofold: the presence of an important Jewish community there and the fear that if these relations cooled there was a possibility that South Africa would be drawn closer to Egypt which, to a large extent, controlled the regional lines of communication by land and sea between South Africa and Europe. However, Israel usually voted with the African states at the United Nations on issues concerning South Africa.

Israel's special relationship with France, which at that time was the major supplier of its military equipment, led Israel to vote with France at the United Nations General Assembly on issues concerning both Algeria and nuclear experiments in the Sahara desert, although this could have endangered Israel's standing in Africa. It should be pointed out that the head of state in Ghana, Nkrumah, expressed his understanding of Israel's stand on these matters.[126]

Latin America

During the first years of its existence, Israel was accustomed to view the countries of Latin America as stable and constant supporters, especially in debates at the United Nations.[127] But during the course of time, disturbing

126. See No. 490.

127. This support began prior to the establishment of the State of Israel during the voting in the United Nations General Assembly session held on 29 November 1947. Of the 33 votes in favour of partition and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, 13 were cast by Latin American states. Of the 27 countries that voted for freedom of passage in the Suez Canal at the United Nations in September-October 1959, 11 were cast by Latin American states.

signs concerning relations between Israel and these countries began to appear. The Arab states carried out activities against Israel through the embassies of the U.A.R. and Lebanon, the offices of the Arab League, and the large Arab community in Latin America. Representatives of communist organizations in some of the countries of the region added a further anti-Israel element. On the other hand, the Jewish communities in Latin America the population of which in this period numbered about 650,000, of whom 400,00 lived in Argentina, did not have a great public or political impact.[128] Furthermore, Israel's diplomatic representation in Latin America was insufficient: the legation (later embassy) in Mexico was responsible for six countries in Central America as well as Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. The legation (later embassy) in Peru also covered Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador.

Israel reached the conclusion that it would be necessary to take the initiative to revitalize contacts with the Latin American nations. The main thrust of this plan was the visit of the Israeli minister of foreign affairs to ten countries on this continent: Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, and El Salvador. During the course of the visit (May–July 1959), Golda Meir met with presidents and foreign ministers and visited the Jewish communities. She signed cultural exchange agreements with Brazil, Mexico, and El Salvador, and approved cultural, trade, and shipping agreements with Uruguay. She chaired a meeting of Israeli representatives in Latin America held in Montevideo on 29-30 May 1959, and deliberated on plans of action on this continent.

The success of this visit was marred by an incident that occurred during Mrs. Meir's visit to Venezuela. Israel's relations with this country began to deteriorate with the election in February 1959 of Romulo Betancourt to the post of president. His policy was to free his country from dependence on the United States and to find allies among the "oppressed" peoples, such as were to be found in the Arab states. Further ties were based on the fact that Venezuela was, like many Arab states, an oil producing country. In April 1959, a delegation of observers, led by the minister of mines and oil, attended the conference of Arab oil producing states in Cairo, held at the initiative of the Arab League.

The first sign of the deterioration of relations between Israel and Venezuela occurred in May 1959 when the latter decided to move its legation from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. This was followed by an embarrassing incident during Golda Meir's visit to Caracas when the minister of mines

128. See Golda Meir's report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs senior staff on her visit to Latin America—No. 481.

and oil spoke insultingly in reaction to her comments on the oil conference in Cairo.[129] In the event, it was all for the best: the incident was settled and as compensation the Venezuelan legation (later embassy) remained in Jerusalem.

The rise of Fidel Castro to power in Cuba on 1 January 1959 and the tendency of his government to strengthen its ties with the Afro-Asian bloc, with special attention to the U.A.R., stimulated Israel to make relations more meaningful, but Cuba did not welcome Israel's overtures, even though it permitted the opening of a legation in Havana, which came about in December 1959.

Immigration of Jews from Countries of Distress

During 1958–1959, Israel continued its efforts to bring about the immigration of Jews in distress—from North Africa and East Europe. This angered the Arab states, which saw immigration as a method of strengthening Israel from the economic and military viewpoint, and they applied pressure to the countries concerned demanding that they not permit the Jews to leave.

The immigration was often conducted clandestinely and circuitously and Israel involved different elements throughout the world in the attempt to open the gates. In order to be effective it was forced to work behind the scenes so that its "tracks" would not be obvious. In this area official Israel had a number of unofficial associates—the secret services, the Jewish Agency, specifically its Immigration Department, and various Jewish organizations. It is for this reason that the documentation on this subject is only partial.

The main North African country of immigration was Morocco, where from the time it attained independence in 1956 emigration was prohibited. The situation of its Jews deteriorated after Morocco joined the Arab League in October 1958 and Israel began to assist Jews to reach Israel by clandestine routes. At the same time, Jewish organizations, especially the World Jewish Congress under the leadership of Dr. Nahum Goldmann, tried to intercede with the Moroccan authorities. These efforts did not bear fruit. It was only at the beginning of 1961 that Morocco permitted emigration under specific circumstances.[130] During the five years 1956–1961, approximately 25,000 Moroccan Jews immigrated to Israel.[131]

129. On Golda Meir's comment on the oil conference in Cairo see No. 479.
130. See Vol. 14, Chapter 23.
131. See Isser Harel, *Security and Democracy* (Hebrew), p. 318.

Tunisia, under the rule of Habib Bourguiba, took a moderate stand toward its Jewish community, although after it joined the Arab League in October 1958, there was a degree of deterioration in their situation. Despite this, the Jews were permitted to emigrate to Israel so long as it was done as quietly as possible. It was only in 1960 that the Jewish Agency Immigration office in Tunisia was closed down.

At this time, a revolt was taking place in Algeria against French rule and Israel was concerned about the fate of the Jewish population after the French withdrew. It sent Israelis to Algeria to encourage the Jews to immigrate, but two of these emissaries were abducted in February 1958. Efforts to liberate them were not successful and they were murdered by their captors.[132] The Jews of Algeria had been granted French citizenship in 1870 (the Cremieux edict) and were entitled, on an equal footing with other French citizens who left Algeria, to the generous benefits given by the French government. Thus only a few Algerian Jews emigrated to Israel.

From August-September 1958, Romania was the main East European country from which Jews emigrated to Israel. The Romanian authorities wished to rid their country of this minority and to pass on to the Romanian population the jobs and apartments which would become vacant. It was convenient for them to describe this as a humanitarian act of "unification of families" of those who were still living in Romania with their relatives in Israel. As the stream of immigrants grew, statements were made in Israel that this immigration was beneficial to Israel in the area of security. As a consequence of Arab protests and Soviet pressure, the Romanians published a statement on 25 February 1958, expressing their support of the Arab states, and denying the existence of any agreement concerning immigration between Romania and Israel or "other Zionists". It was defined as Romania's desire out of humanitarian considerations, to allow the unification of families which had been broken up during World War II. The statement contained a severe attack on Israel as a tool of American imperialism and on international Zionism.[133]

In discussions between the Israeli minister and officials in Bucharest the Romanians put forward the following arguments:

1. The unification of families had never ceased, and this policy still continued.
2. All those who desired to emigrate to Israel had already done so, and the cases of those who still remained were being examined.
3. The cessation of emigration had been caused by the excessive

132. See No. 503, n. 1.
133. See No. 511.

publicity given it in the world press, and the falsification of Romania's intentions made by senior Israeli spokesmen.

4. The matter of unification of families was an internal Romanian affair.

However, in November 1959, the rate of emigration increased once again, apparently as the result of three factors:

1. The internal problems that had led to the renewal of emigration in 1958 had not been solved;
2. A campaign in the Israeli press, and even more so in the world press, against the arrest of Jews and against the separation of families;
3. The pressure applied by personalities and organizations on Romanian representatives in different places throughout the world.[134]

Poland, whose Jewish population increased as a result of the repatriation of Jews from the Soviet Union, provided the second largest contingent of immigrants after Romania. Following a peak of nearly 32,000 immigrants in 1957, the number dropped to approximately 4,000 during each of the years under review. Over half of the Jewish population of Poland emigrated and only those who hesitated remained behind, whether because of their desire to remain in Poland, to emigrate to other countries, or to wait until they had received information from Israel as to how the immigrants from Poland had fared.[135]

Hungary had permitted emigration in November 1956 but banned it in May-June 1957, claiming that this migration caused smuggling that harmed its economy to the tune of three and a half million dollars. It stated that until this sum was reimbursed there would be no immigration.[136] Having no choice, Israel carried out negotiations that ended in a verbal agreement (October 1958) according to which it apparently agreed to pay this sum to Hungary in installments.[137] This created a vicious circle—Israel did not pay when the numbers of immigrants was not in accordance with its expectations, and Hungary refused to permit emigration on the grounds that the payments agreed upon were not being met.[138]

Emigration from the Soviet Union and its other East European satellites was extremely limited during the period under review.[139]

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134. See the review by the Israel Minister in Bucharest of 24 January 1960 in file 130.23/3345/39.
135. See No. 498.
136. See No. 500.
137. See No. 506.
138. See No. 520.
139. For data on immigration from Eastern Europe see Govrin, *Israel-Soviet Relations* (Hebrew), p. 197.

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The Middle East Crisis

12	19 July 1958	**Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Israel's demand to open an alternative route of supply to British troops in Jordan.
13	19 July 1958	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassies in London and Washington** (telegram) Prime minister's meeting with the British ambassador: Anglo-Israeli cooperation and British supply of arms to Israel.
14	20 July 1958	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassy in London** (telegram) Prime minister's message to the British prime minister: protest against violation of Israel's sovereignty.
15	20 July 1958	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassy in London** (telegram) Prime minister and minister of foreign affairs' conversation with the British ambassador: Israel's protest and reiteration of Its commitment to allow overflight of troops and supply to Jordan.
16	21 July 1958	**E. Elath to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Meeting with Gaitskell: Labour's position on the Middle East crisis.
17	21 July 1958	**E. Elath to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram) Meeting with Foreign Secretary Lloyd: future of Jordan and Lebanon, British supply of arms to Israel.
18	21 July 1958	**H. Macmillan to D. Ben-Gurion** Reply to Ben-Gurion's message.
19	22 July 1958	**E. Elath to the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram) Evaluation of his meeting with Lloyd, Anglo-Israel relations.
20	22 July 1958	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassies in London and Washington** (telegram) Prime minister's meeting with the British ambassador: supply overflights to Jordan.
21	22 July 1958	**A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram) Meeting with Dulles: Israel's demands in the wake of Middle East events, supply of arms, regular consultations, laying of a pipe-line, organization of non-Arab countries in the Middle East.
22	22 July 1958	**Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division** (telegram) Eban's meeting with Dulles: Dulles's review of events in the Middle East and his reply to Israel's requests.
23	23 July 1958	**Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division** (telegram) Herzog and others' conversation with Dulles: overflight of U.S. planes to supply British troops in Jordan.

39	1 August 1958	**Y. Avidar to the East European Division** (telegram) Avidar's remarks following the submission of the Soviet Note.
40	2 August 1958	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Conversation with Rountree: Soviet Note, Soviet embargo proposal, special Security Council meeting to discuss the Middle East crisis.
41	3 August 1958	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London** (telegram) Rundall's and Lawson's meetings with Ben-Gurion: further British request to overfly troops to Jordan.
42	3 August 1958	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Meeting with Dulles: Dulles's indignation at Israel's reaction to the Soviet Note.
43	3 August 1958	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Evaluation of his meeting with Dulles; suggestion of a Note from Israel to the U.S. secretary of state.
44	3 August 1958	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Suggested outlines to a reply Note to the Soviet Note.
45	4 August 1958	**United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington** (telegram) Prime minister's meeting with Lawson: Israel's reaction to the Soviet Note.
46	4 August 1958	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Suggestion to resolve the tension between Israel and the U.S.
47	4 August 1958	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London** (telegram) Prime Minister's meeting with Rundall: reply to the Soviet Note, continuation of British overflights.
48	5 August 1958	**A. Levavi to the Israel Embassy in Moscow** (telegram) Delay of Israel's reply to the Soviet Note.
49	5 August 1958	**D. Ben-Gurion to the U.S. Secretary of State** Israel and the Soviet threat - reply to the Soviet Note.
50	5 August 1958	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Submission of Ben-Gurion's letter regarding the Soviet Note to the secretary of state.
51	6 August 1958	**E. Elath to the Prime Minister** (telegram) Meeting with Macmillan: arms supply, Middle East situation.
52	7 August 1958	**E. Elath to the Prime Minister** (telegram) Evaluation of his meeting with Macmillan.
53	10 August 1958	**J.F. Dulles to the Prime Minister** Israel's reply to the Soviet Note.
54	11 August 1958	**A. Levavi to the Israel Embassy in Moscow** (telegram) Israel's reply to the Soviet Note.

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110	20 December 1959	**M. Bartur to the Israel Diplomatic Representation in Athens** (telegram) Detention of the *Astypalea* in the Suez Canal.
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113	17 March 1959	**Appendix A** Letter dated 17 March 1959 from the Representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council.
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116	13 May 1958	**M. Varon to M. Bartur** U.S. State Department response to Jewish Organizations' claims of anti-Jewish discriminatory measures of Arab states.
117	9 October 1958	**E. Najar to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Arab pressure on Japan and a proposal to fight this pressure using the influence of Jewish businessmen in the U.S.
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119	9 December 1958	**E. Sasson to the Director of the West European Division** Italian submission to the Arab boycott.
120	23 December 1958	**E. Sasson to the Director of the West European Division** Italian Foreign Ministry reply with regard to the Arab boycott.
121	1 January 1959	**M. Fischer to the Israel Ambassador in Rome** Possibilities of legal action in Italy against the Arab boycott.
122	21 January 1959	**Sh. Levin to A. Chelouche** Anti-boycott activities in Japan.

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169	15 January 1959	**Y. Tekoah to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Conversation with Hammarskjöld: Incidents in the south and the north, implementation of cease-fire, Arab refugees.
170	25 January 1959	**M. Comay to the Israel Embassy in Washington** (telegram) Instruction to table a complaint in the Security Council on border incidents.
171	29 January 1959	**A. Eban to Ch. Herter** Request that the U.S. intervene in the Security Council in support of Israel's complaint.
172	8 February 1959	**Y. Tekoah to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Sends a letter by Hammarskjöld to Ben-Gurion: Israel's complaint to the Security Council.
173	10 February 1959	**D. Ben-Gurion to D. Hammarskjöld** Border incidents, Israel's attendance at the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission, implementation of Article VIII.
174	13 February 1959	**Y. Tekoah to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Transmits a letter by Hammarskjöld to Ben-Gurion: Ben-Gurion's complaint about the "double standard" in U.N. investigation of border incidents, Article VIII, legal opinion in the matter of U.N. officials' participation in the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission.
175	17 February 1959	**A. Biran to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U.N.** (telegram) Transmits a letter from Ben-Gurion to Hammarskjöld: discussion of the principles of the cease-fire agreements, Israel's participation in the mixed armistice commissions.
176	19 February 1959	**Y. Tekoah to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Meeting with Hammarskjöld: delineation of the northern cease-fire line, border incidents.
177	19 February 1959	**Israel Permanent Mission to the U.N. to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Transmits a memorandum by Hammarskjöld to the prime minister: study of the situation in the north, opening fire instructions.
178	19 February 1959	**A. Biran to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U.N.** (telegram) Meeting with Von Horn: Study of the situation in the north, border incident in the north and the Jordanian lines.
179	13 June 1959	**A. Biran to J. Herzog** Situation on Mount Scopus.
180	24 December 1959	**A. Biran to the Israel Mission Abroad** (telegram) Shooting incident at Tel Kazir.
181	18 January 1958	**Appendix A** Text of Report from Dr. Francisco Urrutia, Personal

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251	30 July 1958	**F.E. Shinnar to the West European Division** Germany's conduct in the Middle East crisis.
252	31 July 1958	**M. Fischer to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** Evaluation of Israel-German relations and recommendations for future action.
253	28 August 1958	**M.G. Hess to M. Fischer** Compensation from Austria.
254	23 September 1958	**F.E. Shinnar to M. Fischer** (telegram) Meeting with Scherpenberg: German and Italian position towards Nasser.
255	15 October 1958	**F.E. Shinnar to L. Eshkol, P. Sapir and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Meeting with Adenauer: German loan to Israel, German guarantee of Israel's independence and integrity.
256	9 January 1959	**Y. Sahar to the West European Division** Meeting with Kreisky: demonstration against Austrian films in Israel, raising the level of diplomatic representation between Israel and Austria.
257	16 January 1959	**F.E. Shinnar to the West European Division** Shinnar's meetings and conversation concerning relations between the two Germanies and the Arabs.
258	22 January 1959	**F.E. Shinnar to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division** (telegram) Meeting with Scherpenberg: Germany's relations with Israel and the Arab states, establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany.
259	4 March 1959	**F.E. Shinnar to W. Eytan and M. Fischer** Conversation with von Eckhardt: international tension, Eckhardt's visit to Israel, establishment of diplomatic relations.
260	10 April 1959	**M. Fischer to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Meeting with the Austrian minister in Israel: Austrian assistance regarding immigration from Romania, Austrian fund of \$6 million to support Austrian Jewish victims of the Nazis.
261	21 May 1959	**F.E. Shinnar to M. Fischer** Meeting with Adenauer: international situation, establishment of diplomatic relations.
262	5 June 1959	**Y. Sahar to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Raising of the level of diplomatic representation between Israel and Germany.

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105. *Record Group: Presidents of the State of Israel, files of President Ben Zvi*

93. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel Missions Abroad*
    - 93.01 Coded telegrams
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    - 93.08 Washington
    - 93.39 Moscow

130. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Head Office*
    - 130.02 Office of the Minister and the Director-General
    - 130.03 International Organizations Division
    - 130.06 Economics Division
    - 130.09 Coded Telegrams
    - 130.11 East European Division
    - 130.15 Middle East Division
    - 130.16 Armistice Affairs Division
    - 130.17 Division of International Cooperation
    - 130.18 Division for Politico-Economic Planning
    - 130.19 Personal deposits by M.F.A. personnel
    - 130.23 General Political Archive

Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives (Abbreviated reference: IMDEA)

Ben-Gurion Archives

Public Record Office (Abbreviated reference: PRO)
Prem 11 Prime Minister's Office

Abbreviations used in Editorial Headings and References

Inc.	Incoming text
Orig.	Original
Outg	Outgoing text
M.F.A.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
M.K.	Member of the Knesset
Tel.	Telegram

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NOTES
AND SUMMARIES OF
HEBREW DOCUMENTS

All summaries of Hebrew documents and all notes are arranged according to the numbers of the documents in the Main Volume. The notes are translated in full, even those pertaining to passages that are omitted in the summaries.

Editorial headings of Hebrew documents are reproduced in full, while headings to translations of notes to documents in English or French are given in shortened version. Where no notes are appended, the English and French documents are represented by headings only. Editorial notes appear in the same order as in the main volume, preceding the relevant document.

1. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 14 July 1958

Coded Tel. W19; Outg.: 130.09/2312/5

R. Shiloah instructs Herzog[1] to arrange for an immediate meeting with the U.S. secretary of state, and, if this proves impossible, with Herter, and to convey to him the following in the prime minister's name:

1) The entire Middle East will fall to Nasser and the Soviets if the coup in Iraq is not suppressed immediately; this can be done by Iran and Turkey, with the assistance of the United States.

2) Israel suggests that the United States encourage Iran and Turkey to take immediate military steps against Iraq. Information in hand suggests that there are elements among the Iraqi people and the army who would be willing to act against the new regime.

3) Israel is endangered by the latest developments, which makes it vital that the United States equip Israel without delay with adequate quantities of weaponry, particularly for the air and armoured forces, and for anti-submarine units.[2]

4) The prime minister has summoned Lawson and will give him the same message tonight.[3]

For Herzog's information only: Israel has approached Iran and Turkey in the same vein.[4]

Notes

1. Jacob Herzog, Israel minister in Washington, served as chargé d'affaires *a.i.* while Abba Eban was in Israel.
2. No documentation of Herzog's meeting with Dulles has been found. It is plausible that the pressure of events kept the secretary of state from finding time to meet with Herzog. In meetings with lower-level officials at the State Department, Herzog gained

the impression that the United States had no intention of intervening in Iraq. (See, e.g., Herzog to the M.F.A., W969, 16 July 1958, 130.09/2313/5). Later he cabled that the prospects for intervention in Iraq were not very good, for the following reasons: the lack of opposition to the revolutionary regime, in both the military and the general public; the anticipated reaction at the U.N. to such action; and the weakness of King Hussein, who was the only actor with a legal basis for intervening in Iraq. (See Herzog to the M.F.A., W2, 18 July 1958, ibid.)

3. In a meeting with Lawson, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Ben-Gurion stressed the "vital need for immediate action by Turkey and Iran, at the initiative of the United States and with its encouragement." The ambassador promised to convey the message to Washington. (See the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Washington, W21, 15 July 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)
4. The approach was made through the Israel ambassador in Rome, Eliahu Sasson; see No. 419.

2. Minutes of a Meeting between the Prime Minister and Barbara Salt, the British Chargé d'Affaires. Jerusalem, 15 July 1958

3. E. Elath (London) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 15 July 1958

Coded Tel. 427; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath reports on his meeting at the Foreign Office with Sir William Hayter, deputy under-secretary of state. The latter told Elath that American forces were landing at that moment in Beirut.

Jordan is calm for the moment, but an official request for aid may come from Hussein at any time, and Israel is requested therefore to permit flights over its territory. He stressed that this appeal is based on the interest shared by Israel and Britain in Jordan's defence against a takeover by Nasser.

Elath asked about Turkey's position and was told that, in spite of the weighty arguments for its intervention, both as a member of the Baghdad pact and as a Middle Eastern country, its common border with the Soviet Union makes any activity on its part risky, and therefore the British and the Americans are refraining from putting any pressure on that country.

4. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in London and Washington. 16 July 1958

Coded Tel. (London) 308; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

The prime minister has had a talk with American Ambassador Lawson, the minister of foreign affairs also being present. He referred to Britain's request to overfly Israeli territory with troops for Jordan and said he would lay this matter before the government.[1] Prior to that, he would like to have some more information:

1) Does the United States government support Britain's appeal and does it wish Israel to agree to it?

2) Is there no other possible way to transfer the forces to Jordan?

3) Is the Jordanian government aware of this appeal and does it wish Israel to agree to it?

The prime minister explained that Israel is worried about some aspects of the matter. It is true that Israel has a vital interest in preserving stability in the region and in strengthening the position of the West there, but it is not taking part in the operation. If it agrees to Britain's appeal, it will become an active partner. Israel's support of the operation will not sit well with its friends in the world with neutralist attitudes, nor with the Labour opposition in Britain which is particularly friendly towards Israel. There are also elements in Israel that oppose intervention on ideological grounds. The Soviet Union could use the operation as a pretext to act against Israel outside the framework of the United Nations.

The prime minister said that if the Americans reply in the affirmative to these three questions, he will recommend the government to approve the request. At the same time he asks for understanding of Israel's delicate situation and its fear of exposing itself.

The prime minister requested that a reply be forthcoming before the government meets and Lawson promised a speedy reply.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 2
2. See No. 7.

5. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 16 July 1958

Coded Tel. 441; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath reports on his meeting at the Foreign Office with Hoyer Millar, who told him, on behalf of Selwyn Lloyd, the foreign secretary, that King Hussein has intimated he will ask for help if necessary. However, no official appeal has been received so far, and the British fear that if Hussein hesitates for too long it might be too late. To Elath's question, the answer is that Britain has proposed joint action in Jordan to the Americans and that Hussein is for it. The Americans acted alone in Lebanon in order to avoid dispersal of their forces and reserve British forces, which would have to defend Jordan, if necessary, and also to prevent the French from joining the operation. Hoyer Millar said the British have no intention of involving the French in the operation in Jordan, "because they do not have enough transport planes".

6. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 17 July 1958

Coded Tel. 443; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Hoyer Millar, the permanent under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office, informed Elath at 03:30 that Britain was to commence an operation in Jordan within hours. As Israel had not yet responded to their request, he asked the ambassador to obtain the prime minister's agreement. Elath replied that, in spite of the urgency of the matter, he requests the British not to do anything before they obtain Israel's consent, otherwise this may lead to a catastrophe. The permanent under-secretary repeated his request, stressing that "every hour counts now".

After receiving instructions from the prime minister on the telephone,[1] Elath informed Hoyer Millar that Israel had approached the United States in the matter of the British request for overflights, but no reply has been received from them so far. Israel's response will depend on America's reply, which the prime minister hopes will arrive before the government's meeting in the morning. Hoyer Millar expressed his dissatisfaction with this reply and again stressed the urgency of the matter.

The under-secretary contacted Elath again at 07:00 and said that Britain, wishing to give Israel more time, had decided to delay the operation. They are also urging the Americans to give Israel a speedy reply.

Note

1. The approach to the prime minister was made by telephone. See the entry in Ben-Gurion's diary for 17 July, Ben-Gurion Archives.

7. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London. 17 July 1958

Coded Tel. 34; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

Comay informs the embassies of the chain of developments and the exchange of messages in the matter of the airlift of British forces to Jordan.

At 03:30 the American representatives in Israel and in Washington requested permission for an overflight of jet planes to Jordan as a demonstration of strength. Israel gave its agreement to this overflight.[1]

At 06:30 Elath telephoned the prime minister and informed him that the British had decided on an immediate operation and they urgently wanted Israel's reply. The prime minister instructed him to reply that Israel would be able to give its consent only after receiving an affirmative reply to its questions from the United States, and conditional on the government's approval, its meeting having been set for 10:00.

Salt, the British chargé d'affaires, arrived at 09:00 and transmitted the following message: in view of an urgent appeal by Jordan and after consulting with the United States, it was decided to respond to the appeal immediately and to transport 1,500 troops from Cyprus to Amman. This would involve an overflight of Israel, and the British government was convinced that in these special circumstances and in view of Israel's shared interest in the situation, the Israeli government would not withhold its agreement. The chargé d'affaires was given the same information that had been offered in London with the appropriate explanations.

The government met at 10:00. Owing to technical difficulties, Lawson was able to contact Washington only at 11:00 and then transmitted the American reply to Israel's questions. The gist of the reply was that the United States supported the British action, that it requested Israel to accede to Britain's request for an overflight, and that there was no other practical

way of transporting the troops to Jordan. On receiving these answers, the government decided to accede to the British request, with certain stipulations.[2]

At 12:00, Salt transmitted to the prime minister the following message from Macmillan:

"You will know that the British government has decided to send military help to the Government of Jordan to help them deal with an imminent attempt by the United Arab Republic to overthrow the present Jordanian regime. It is essential for this purpose that our aircraft should be allowed to fly over Israel without interference. You will know that the British government's decision has the full support of the United States government. I am sure that the action which we have decided to take is in the true interests of both our countries. Time is of the highest importance if we are to succeed in withstanding this latest threat, and I earnestly appeal to you for your acquiescence. I would be most grateful for your decision at the earliest possible moment".[3]

The prime minister drafted his reply on the spot, which was handed to Salt at 13:00 and transmitted to London by telephone; it ran approximately as follows:

"I have just received your personal message. Although we fully agree with you on the necessity to preserve the independence of Jordan, I must protest against our being faced with accomplished facts by unauthorized flying of airborne forces over our territory, and we trust this will not happen again. We cannot acquiesce in the sovereignty of our country being violated. Our reply to your request has been delayed since we wished first to receive assurances of U.S. approval and responsibility, as we requested yesterday. Now that the reply of the U.S. has been communicated to us, I hereby convey to you our consent to passage of 1,500 troops referred to in your Government's earlier request. I do so on condition that the mission of these forces is to help preserve the independence of Jordan, and that they will not be involved in any way in frontier incidents which unfortunately take place on Jordanian initiative in contravention of the General Armistice Agreement."[4]

Notes

1. See J. Herzog to the M.F.A., WIA966, 17 July 1958, 130.09/2313/5; Shiloah to the embassy in Washington, TNW548, 17 July 1958, 130.09/2312/11.
2. The government resolution read as follows: "Be it resolved that (1) (by a vote of 8 to 4) If the United States agrees to accept responsibility for all the results and if the

government of Jordan so requests, the Government of Great Britain will be informed that it has permission to fly 1,500 soldiers through Israeli airspace, on condition that it undertakes that this force will not intervene should a border dispute erupt between Jordan and Israel. (2) The Government of Great Britain will be requested to maintain the confidentiality of any grant of permission pursuant to paragraph (1) above. (3) The minister of defence will instruct the military censorship that a state of emergency exists in the country and it should act accordingly (See stenographic record of government meeting, 17 July 1958.)

3. The original text, in English, is in File 130.02/5936/57.
4. The original text, in English, is in File 130.02/5936/57.

8. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London. 18 July 1958

Coded Tel. IW54; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

The prime minister has had a talk with American Ambassador Lawson on the American request to allow the air transport of fuel to Jordan.[1] The prime minister said this request makes the present difficult situation still more complicated and pointed to the dangers facing Israel as a result of the operation in Jordan: the British Labour Party is opposed to it, so is Hammarskjöld, and in his wake, the Scandinavian governments and public opinion there. Israel is being strongly criticized by Asian countries, and in particular there is the danger from the Soviet Union, which might decide to destroy Israel in a blitz operation. The government was aware of all these dangers when it consented to the overflight of the 1,500 troops, but now it appears that this is not a one-time action but a continuing operation, and the United States must take into consideration the harm it is causing to Israel. The prime minister enquired again whether there is no other possible way of transporting fuel to Jordan, and when the answer was in the negative, he said: "If this is your honest conclusion and there is no other way, then fly the fuel in without our consent and without our prior knowledge. We may then send you a note of protest and that will be the end of it". He again requested the ambassador to make clear to his government the difficulties facing Israel and to try and find another route for air transport.

The prime minister then raised the subject of the supply of arms to Israel and expressed his astonishment that no answer has so far been received on this subject from the U.S. Administration.[2] The situation in the Middle East is becoming increasingly dangerous, and during Nasser's visit to Moscow further moves on his part were presumably discussed.[3] Morale in Israel is

excellent, but the same cannot be said of its military equipment. The Arab states have received large quantities of arms, which in due course will be used not against the United States but against Israel. The ambassador was requested to explain this to his government, and he promised to do so.

The prime minister requested Herzog to approach the Department of State immediately and discuss with them the matter of the overflights in the above vein, and to prepare the ground for Ambassador Eban's action in respect of the supply of arms.[4]

Notes

1. The request was submitted to Herzog that same night, at 1:30 A.M. It stated that the fuel situation in Jordan was catastrophic. Herzog advised the Americans to submit the request directly in Israel. (See Meroz to the M.F.A., W3, 18 July 1958, 130.09/2313/5.)
2. This evidently refers to Eban's request of Dulles, at their meeting on 30 June, to accelerate the supply of several categories of weapons, especially half-tracks and recoilless guns. See No. 205.
3. Nasser was on a visit to Yugoslavia at the time of the coup in Iraq. He immediately left for Moscow, where he met with Khrushchev on 17 July.
4. See No. 21.

9. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 18 July 1958

Coded Tel. 322; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

The prime minister had a talk with British Ambassador Rundall. He reviewed the relations between the two countries and returned to his offer of eight years before for political and military cooperation on the basis of the values common to both nations.[1] Regarding the overflights, the prime minister said that Israel is becoming more and more implicated. Israel has agreed to the overflight of no more than 1,500 troops. Rundall replied that supplies will have to be flown in until other arrangements were made, but the prime minister made it clear that Israel will not respond positively to such a request.[3]

Notes

1. The reference is to the talks held in 1951 with the commander of the British land forces in the Middle East, General Robertson. See Vol. 6, No. 72.

2. See No. 13.
3. The negotiations over supply flights were evidently continued orally, and the conclusion was in the affirmative. See No. 11.
4. K.C. Doran, British air attaché in Israel.

10. H. Macmillan [London] to D. Ben-Gurion. 18 July 1958

Note

1. See No. 7.

11. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 18 July 1958

Coded Tel. W5; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

The embassy reports that it has informed the Americans of Israel's agreement in principle to the transport of fuel to Jordan by air.[1] It was however made clear that this is not an official acquiescence and that absolute secrecy is essential. The Americans expressed their heartfelt gratitude for this consent and for the cooperation in respect of the overflights of 17 July.

Note

1. Cf. Nos. 8 and 9.

12. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 July 1958

Coded Tel. W15; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

The embassy reports to Comay on talks and meetings at the Department of State on the American request to allow the airlift of fuel and supply for the British forces in Jordan.[1] The Israeli envoys repeated what the prime

minister said to Lawson,[2] to the effect that Israel's consent was given "only if your honest conclusion is that there is no other way", and insisted on the necessity of finding alternative arrangements. The answer was that the United States fully understood Israel's difficult situation and that it was now making other arrangements. An oil tanker is now on its way to the Gulf of Aqaba and a shuttle service will take place from this tanker to the port of Aqaba. This will start on July 22nd, and then the overflights will stop.

Notes

1. See No. 11
2. No. 8.
3. See No. 7, para. 1.

13. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in London and Washington. 19 July 1958

Coded Tel. W57; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

The prime minister has another talk with the British Ambassador, and told him that the lesson of the latest events in the Middle East was that it is necessary to strengthen the bonds between Britain and Israel. He does not have a formal treaty in mind, but is thinking of talks that would lead to preliminary discussions and periodic consultations, and constant cooperation and mutual help, in the military, political, general and intelligence fields. Israel is aware of the great difference between the two countries in size and power, but it bases itself on the moral equality such as exists between the NATO countries, and on reciprocity in discussions, in planning and in aid.

Rundall wrote down the above and promised to convey this message to his government.

Comay draws Elath's attention to the fact that the prime minister does not have much confidence in the British foreign secretary in these affairs, and only a discussion with Macmillan will settle matters. An evasive answer should be considered a rejection. If the reply is in the affirmative, the touchstone will be in the supply of arms to Israel: heavy tanks, bombers and fighters, and anti-submarine weapons. An additional requirement is the laying of a large-bore oil pipeline from Eilat to Haifa or to Ashdod.

Notes

1. According to a 1946 agreement, amended in 1948, Great Britain was allowed to station military forces and maintain bases in Jordan.
2. See Vol. 6, No. 72.

14. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 20 July 1958

Notes

1. See No. 10.
2. See No. 15.

15. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 20 July 1958

Coded Tel. 327; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

Comay briefs the embassy on the talks British Ambassador Rundall had with the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs.

The ambassador said he fears that the prime minister's letter to Macmillan[1] will be misunderstood and its message would mean a heavy or perhaps fatal blow to the entire Jordan operation.

The prime minister explained that the government has authorized the passage of only 1,500 troops, while the BBC has announced that they already number 2000, and that flights continue. When he tried to find out from the British Air Attaché whether the 1,500 had already been transported—the latter said he did not have the information. This put Israel in a ridiculous position.

Rundall then supplied more detailed information on the flights, the number of troops, and the supplies flown in. He said the flights will stop on the evening of the 18th; in addition to the two first-line battalions numbering exactly 1,500 men, 700 support and service troops were also flown in, the total thus being 2,200 in all. The British had investigated all possible sea routes for the transport of supplies, and concluded that if they could not have the supplies flown in, they would not be able to keep their troops in Jordan, which would have serious consequences. He added that

Israel's consent for the overflight of troops naturally implied consent to further flights with a minimal quantity of supplies for the transition period until other arrangements were made, and this was the understanding in London. The entire operation had been planned in great haste and it now depended on the continuation of the airlift. He therefore requests the prime minister to reconsider the wording of his letter to Macmillan.

The prime minister replied that Israel has not been requested to authorize this or that number of flights but a certain number of troops, and the government agreed to that, and to that only, in the expectation that the whole affair would be over in a day or two. The government's decision was not arrived at lightly. Israel fears the reaction of the Soviets, which, if it comes, will not be against Britain but against Israel. If the Jordanian regime falls and Nasser takes over, the West will eventually come to terms with him, and Israel will remain isolated. Israel has the right to be concerned about its security. If there existed that partnership which the prime minister had talked about at their last meeting, perhaps the picture would have looked different. Israel expects Britain to provide it with arms—Centurions and jet fighters and bombers. He is not pressing for an immediate reply to his offer of partnership, but he expects Britain to understand that Israel has nobody to fall back on, while Britain has behind it the United States, NATO and the Commonwealth. This is why he is appealing to Britain, as a friendly and humane nation, not to demand of Israel anything that might put it at risk.

Only the minister of foreign affairs remained for the second part of the meeting. She stressed that it had been very difficult to persuade the government to give its consent to the operation, and had the matter been submitted to it as it has been put today it was very doubtful whether it would have agreed to the overflights.

Rundall met afterwards with Comay and gave him details about the planned flying-in of supplies.

Notes

1. See No. 14.
2. See No. 13.
3. See No. 7.

16. E. Elath (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 July 1958

Coded Tel. 463; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

In a long talk with Gaitskell, Elath reviewed the situation in the Middle East and Israel's position in the present crisis. Gaitskell said he understood Israel's difficulties, but he thought it would have been preferable for Israel to consent to the overflights post factum and to swallow the violation of its sovereignty rather than to be looked upon by the Arabs and the Asian and African countries as a willing partner in the actions of the Americans and the British.

Elath then raised the subject of strengthening Israel's military power and its requests for the supply of arms. Gaitskell said he would do his best: he would meet Macmillan immediately and would also discuss the financial aspect. It was very important, he said, to observe absolute secrecy in this matter in order not to anger the Arabs. He also said that, under the circumstances, it was important for Israel to have more concrete guarantees than those included in the Three Powers' declaration.[2] Elath replied that the time for guarantees had passed, and that what was needed now was close cooperation between those countries that saw a common destiny on the basis of shared values and interests. Israel had ventured such a proposal seven years ago, when Labour was in power, but nothing came of it, and what happened afterwards was a continuous story of the appeasement of the Arabs at Israel's expense, in the hope that this would endear Britain to them. The time has come for Britain to draw conclusions from the failure of that line.

Gaitskell said that he agreed with Elath, and even though his party had been opposed to certain of Israel's actions in the past, their position in principle was that of friendship towards Israel.

Elath comments that he thought this talk very useful and he suggests that Gaitskell be approached with concrete proposals and requests after the British government's reaction to the prime minister's talk with Rundall[1] has been received and after Gaitskell reports on the outcome of his talk with Macmillan on the supply of arms.

Notes

1. See No.13.
2. The 1950 Three Powers' declaration, issued by the United States, Great Britain, and France, proclaimed these countries' desire to preserve peace and stability in the

Middle East and their vigorous opposition to the use of force or threats of the use of force by states in the region. See Vol. 5, No. 248.

17. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 21 July 1958

Coded Tel. 477; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath had a talk with Lloyd on the latter's return from the United States. Lloyd said he did not wish to discuss current issues–what he wanted was to find a solution for Lebanon and Jordan when the present crisis was over. As to Iraq, he commented that there is no alternative but to resign oneself to the situation. He said that in his consultations in Washington and with Hammarskjöld the proposal was made that Lebanon should become a neutral state, which would require international guarantees, with the participation of the Soviet Union and the United Nations. The problem of Jordan was more complicated, but here also the idea of neutrality was raised.

Lloyd said he recognized Israel's vital interest in these problems, as a neighbour of both of these countries, and therefore any solution must be acceptable to Israel. He wished to know Israel's opinion on these proposals.

Elath said he could not express his opinion on these matters without instructions from his government. In any case, Israel wished not only to give advice but to play an appropriate role, as its future would be deeply affected by these decisions, and he mentioned the prime minister's proposal for cooperation.[2]

Lloyd said he had seen the prime minister's proposal but had not yet had the time to study it and to discuss it in depth with Macmillan and his fellow ministers. He asked what was Israel's most urgent request, and was told that Israel needed armaments, in particular submarines and other naval weaponry. Lloyd said "he thought" that this would not prove to be difficult. Elath summed up by saying that the issues raised should necessarily be discussed in person by the foreign ministers and the prime ministers of both states. Lloyd added that the prime minister would receive Macmillan's reply to his letter[4] the next day.

Notes

1. The reference is evidently to the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL), dispatched to Lebanon in the wake of that country's complaint to the Security Council, in May 1958, that the United Arab Republic was interfering in its domestic affairs.
2. See No. 13.
3. No. 14.
4. See No. 18.

18. H. Macmillan (Tel Aviv) to D. Ben-Gurion. 21 July 1958[1]

Notes

1. The text of the message seems to have been cabled from London and printed at the British embassy in Tel Aviv.
2. No. 14

19. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 22 July 1958

Coded Tel. 470; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath analyzes his talk with Lloyd.[1] There is no doubt that the urgency with which he had been summoned to the foreign secretary shows concern over the practical and the internal political significance of the prime minister's letter to Macmillan.[2] At the same time, Lloyd gave no positive intimation about their attitude to the prime minister's proposal of cooperation. He, Elath, doubts whether the events in Iraq have changed the traditional pro-Arab and anti-Israeli attitudes in the British Foreign Office. He fears, on the contrary, that Nuri al-Sa'id's fall will intensify the Foreign Office officials' antagonism towards Israel, and they will do their utmost to block the attempts of any government in power to re-examine Britain's policy in the region. Moreover, he has no faith whatsoever in Macmillan's friendly attitude towards Israel nor in Lloyd's ability to influence him in that direction.

On the other hand, he thinks it an excellent opportunity to obtain from Britain certain types of arms in quantities that had been refused hitherto,

especially while the British still have their forces in Jordan and are dependent in this one way or another on Israel.

He therefore proposes:

1) To submit without delay concrete proposals for the supply of arms.

2) To accede to Lloyd's request and to submit suggestions for solutions in Lebanon and in Jordan. The opportunity must not be missed to inform the British of Israel's position and to warn them against solutions endangering its interests.

Notes

1. See No. 17.
2. No. 14.

20. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in London and Washington. 22 July 1958

Coded Tel. 335; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

The issue of the airlift of supplies for the British forces in Jordan was discussed by the prime minister with Rundall. The prime minister said he was impressed by Macmillan's letter[1] and its openness, and he accepts it as a reply to his own letter. The prime minister also accepts the explanation that there had been a misunderstanding in respect of the decision taken by the Israeli government.

Rundall said that, in spite of their efforts, the British have not yet found an alternative route for supplies. In order to make things easier for Israel, he suggests that the supplies be flown over in civilian planes, or, alternatively, that the Americans fly them in their own planes. The prime minister rejected these proposals and insists that the government is opposed to the additional overflights.

Continuing, Rundall pointed to a number of expressions in Macmillan's letter in order to demonstrate that the British were lending a willing ear to the proposal for cooperation and they were ready to reconsider their present policy in the region. The prime minister said he believed in the sincerity of these words, and that he was awaiting developments patiently, knowing how difficult it was to change old habits.

A discussion then took place on the Soviet infiltration of the region. The prime minister said that the only way to block it was by mobilizing all the

forces in the region opposing this infiltration, and in particular Israel, which is the only stable state in the area that has no choice between the Western and the Eastern camps. Finally, the prime minister said he would cable details on the arms requested by Israel.[5]

Notes

1. No. 18.
2. No. 14.
3. In a Knesset debate on 21 July, Menachem Begin criticized the manner in which the government had handled the British request to allow its planes to overfly Israel. At Ben-Gurion's suggestion, the matter was referred to the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. (See *Divrei ha-Knesset,* Third Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXIV, pp. 2338–45).
4. The meeting was held on 17 July; see No. 354.
5. The telegram has not been located; but see No. 51 and n. 2 there.

21. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 22 July 1958

Coded Tel. W40; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban has had a talk with Dulles on the Middle Eastern crisis. He commenced by congratulating the United States on its initiative which had strengthened the West's standing in the region. He called on the United States not to withdraw from Lebanon before it has achieved its aims there.

He then turned to analyzing Israel's security problems in the light of developments in the Middle East in the wake of American intervention. The calm achieved is purely temporary, and when the British and Americans have withdrawn, Israel will be left facing the hostility of the surrounding nations intensified by the foreign intervention. Worse still, the arms which have fallen into the hands of the Arabs have strengthened their military power. Israel therefore requests that the United States take several measures to assure Israel's security, namely, to supply it with arms; to issue an unequivocal commitment to come to its aid if attacked, instead of the ambiguous declarations which have been made so far; to establish firm and regular procedures of consultation; to help in laying the large-bore oil pipeline;[2] to support the establishment of a united front of the non-Arab states in the Middle East, namely Israel, Turkey, Iran, and Ethiopia.

On the subject of the supply of arms, Eban stressed that Israel's situation

should not be judged by the present state of affairs, when British and American forces are stationed in the region, but by the serious danger facing Israel from the steadily-arming Arab world.

Eban then mentioned the proposed summit meeting[3] and requested that the United States make it unambiguously clear to the Soviets that Israel's integrity and independence were America's own vital interests and whoever endangers them does so at his own risk.

Dulles's reply is given in No. 22.[4]

Notes

1. During the Security Council discussions of the situation in the Middle East, Japan submitted a resolution calling for a withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Lebanon and their replacement by a U.N. force. The motion failed because of a Soviet veto. See Introduction, p. xv.
2. After the removal of the blockade in the aftermath of the Sinai Campaign, Israel laid an oil pipeline from Eilat north to Ashdod and Haifa, through which it pumped oil transported from sources in the Persian Gulf, which covered most of its domestic requirements. The pipeline had a diameter of eight to sixteen inches. In the wake of the developments in the Middle East, the idea was floated of enlarging the pipeline to 32-36 inches and allowing other countries to purchase oil while bypassing the Suez Canal. To accomplish this Israel would have required political and financial assistance from the United States. (See Eshkol to Eban, TNW558, 20 July 1958, 130.09/2312/11.)
3. On 19 July, Khrushchev sent notes to the leaders of the United States, Great Britain, France, and India, inviting them to a summit conference in Geneva to discuss the crisis in the Middle East. Representatives of Arab countries were also to take part in the meetings. The Western leaders agreed in principle, but proposed that the summit be held in the framework of the Security Council. After an exchange of notes on the matter, Khrushchev withdrew his initiative.
4. No. 22.

22. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 22 July 1958

Notes

1. See No. 21.
2. Ibid., n. 1.
3. Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan.
4. Abdullah Khalil, prime minister of Sudan from 1956 to 1958.
5. See No. 21, n. 2.

23. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 23 July 1958

Notes

1. In this telegram Herzog reported that Israeli representatives had been summoned for an urgent meeting with the secretary of state and reviewed the main points of their conversation. The implication of Dulles's remarks, he wrote, was that Israel's reply would be of decisive importance for deferring "far-reaching developments" in Jordan. He proposed that preparations be made for an immediate consultation (23 July 1958, in File 130.09/2313/5).
2. No. 8.
3. See No. 19.

24. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 23 July 1958

Coded Tel. W50; Outg.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban refers to his last meeting with Secretary of State Dulles,[1,2] when he received the impression that the Americans were under heavy pressure from the British following Israel's negative response to Britain's appeal. It can be expected that the blame for the eventual failure of the Jordan operation will be laid at Israel's door. It also appears that they have lost hope of holding onto Jordan even for a short time, and the crucial decision will be taken in London at the forthcoming consultation;[3] the Government of the United States wishes to hear from Israel what its position would be in such an event.

In view of this situation, Eban recommends that Israel consent to the overflights on condition that absolute secrecy be observed, or, alternatively, that the proposals made by Herzog at his meeting with Dulles[4] be adopted. As regards Jordan's future, Eban thinks it desirable that he himself go to London to keep in touch with Dulles, and he also suggests that he be joined by an envoy from Israel who will convey the views of the prime minister.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 23, n. 1.
2. No. 23.
3. Secretary Dulles was about to leave for London to participate in the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Baghdad pact, which convened there on 28-29 July 1958.
4. See No. 23.
5. Reuven Shiloah was dispatched from Israel for this; see also No. 29, n. 6.

25. A. Eban (Washington) to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 23 July 1958

Coded Tel. W55; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban again strongly recommends that Israel consent to the American overflights. The British have notified the Americans that otherwise they will not be able to keep the Jordan operation supplied. Whether that is the case or not, Israel will be held responsible for the failure of the operation, just when the atmosphere of cooperation with these countries is improving and on the eve of the summit meeting, in which the Soviets demand that the Arabs participate. Israel's hope of success depends entirely on the goodwill of the British and the Americans. If Israel does not cooperate with them, they will feel free of any obligations towards it, including the supply of arms.

Eban recommends that consent to the flights for one more week be given only if absolute secrecy is observed. Israel must insist that the cargoes include items of a civilian character, so that in case of publicity being given to the operation Israel can argue that mainly non-military items were concerned. Israel will thus appear as having refused British overflights of a military nature and as having acceded to American flights carrying civilian and humanitarian cargoes–since the U.S. has no troops in Jordan. All this is conditional on all efforts being made to have the road from Aqaba finished within the next few days.

26. Editorial Note

Israel and the Countries of the Periphery

As early as September 1957, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs devised a plan to strengthen ties with Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia. The plan came to be known as the "peripheral entente"; but this was misleading, since Israel did not conclude a formal alliance with these countries and cooperation with them was generally bilateral. Developments in the Middle East increased the importance of this idea; in Israel it was thought desirable to involve the United States in the plan, so that it would give its blessing and use its influence to get the countries in question to respond favourably to Israel's efforts for rapprochement. Ambassador Eban was instructed to convey a note on this subject from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower.

27. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 July 1958

Coded Tel. W62; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports to the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs on his meeting with Dulles, at which he conveyed the prime minister's message to the secretary of state.[1] Dulles read the message and said he was impressed with the urgency of the matter; he gave instructions that the message be conveyed to the President immediately. He then commented on the message and also on Eban's proposal that during his stay in London he urge the prime ministers of Iran and Turkey to cooperate with Israel.[4] [For the text of the message and Dulles's comments–see Main Volume, pp. 44-49.]

Notes

1. The prime minister's communication is not printed in full here; several words and two paragraphs have been omitted, as marked.
2. Libya signed agreements with Great Britain (in July 1953) and the United States (in September 1954) permitting those countries to maintain military forces and bases on its territory, in return for military and economic assistance.
3. See No. 21 and n. 2 there.
4. According to another telegram (Eban to the M.F.A., W64, 24 July 1958, 130.09/2313/5), it was agreed with Dulles that Eban would meet with him in London, for which the secretary was about to leave to attend the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Baghdad pact countries. On Eisenhower's reply, see No. 33.

28. Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London. 24 July 1958

Coded Tel. W82; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

The embassies are instructed to convey Israel's reply to Britain and the United States. Israel has proposed to the United States a plan that it thought could change and save the situation.[3] Practical proposals regarding supplies have been laid before Britain.[4] An urgent consultation on all the issues is necessary, and it is also desirable for France to take part.[5] Britain and the United States must understand that Israel's main concern is to assure its survival; Israel, with the help of other countries in the region,

can be of crucial service to the West. Israel cannot consent to an airlift of undefined duration, which would put it at risk, without adequate guarantees.

Israel will turn a blind eye for a few more days to the overflights of British and American planes, until an answer is received as to whether the United States finds it useful to discuss Israel's proposals, and likewise until a reply is forthcoming from Britain. If the Arabs are asked to participate in the summit meeting,[6] Israel will insist on also being invited.

Notes

1. See Nos. 24 and 25.
2. See No. 17 and No. 19.
3. See No. 27.
4. See No. 13.
5. Accordingly it was decided to send Golda Meir to France for a meeting with Premier de Gaulle. See No. 31 and n. 1 there.
6. See No. 21, n. 3.

29. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 July 1958

Coded Tel. W67; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports to the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs on his meeting with Dulles. He has read out their telegram (No. 28) and added some clarifications. The secretary of state expressed the hope that there would be no misunderstandings. The airlift will end within a week or two; they wish for it to end as soon as possible in order to have the planes in readiness for any emergencies. He said repeatedly: "I would think there is no incompatibility between what you and I have said."

Eban stressed again that he had been instructed to say that Israel would only turn a blind eye to the overflights for another few days. He is not authorized to promise more than that, and this promise must be seen also in the context of what he had conveyed at the start of the meeting, namely, with the expectation that they would inform Israel within a few days of their willingness to enter on serious discussions of Israel's proposals which had been laid before them on Monday[2] and again today, and also in the prime minister's talk with Lawson.[3] The secretary said he would study Israel's proposals and would give his reply in due course.

Eban then turned to discuss the future of Jordan. He said Israel is weighing its position and will reply to the secretary's questions of yesterday, and he hopes to convey the answer in a secret talk to take place in London.[6]

He also referred to the forthcoming summit[7] meeting, and repeated Israel's demand to participate should the Arabs be invited. His impression from the secretary's reaction was that he considered the meeting not to be in their interest and would do what he could to postpone it.

Notes

1. See No. 28.
2. See No. 21.
3. See No. 8.
4. See No. 23.
5. See No. 20.
6. Dulles met with Eban in London on 27 July. No details of this meeting have been found in the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to excerpt from the conversation published by the United States, the Israeli representatives again raised Ben-Gurion's idea of encouraging broad cooperation among the anti-Nasserist governments in the Middle East. With regard to Jordan, the Israelis said that should it prove impossible to maintain the status quo, serious thought should be given to the idea of dismembering the kingdom, annexing the East Bank to Iraq, and turning the West Bank into "some kind of autonomous political unit with which there could be a union with Israel." Full annexation of the West Bank to Israel would not be to Israel's benefit, because of the Jordanian population there. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 31, pp. 74-77, Memorandum of a Conversation, Embassy residence, London, July 27, 1958.)
7. See No. 21, n. 3
8. Not found.

30. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.[1] 24 July 1958

Coded Tel. 486; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath met Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd, who requested that Israel put no obstacles in the way of the continuation of the airlift. He asked Elath to transmit this request to the Israeli government, and mentioned that Rundall too was himself making efforts. The talk then turned to the summit meeting, Elath repeating Israel's demand to participate should the Arabs be invited. Lloyd looked somewhat embarrassed and said he could not give an answer

on the spot, but after some thought said there was no need to invite the Arabs, but should they be invited—so will Israel.

Note

1. Sent also to the British Commonwealth Division and to Tsur in Paris.

31. D. D. Eisenhower (Washington) to the Prime Minister. 25 July 1958

Notes

1. No. 27.
2. The reference is to the Eisenhower Doctrine, approved by Congress on 7 March 1957 and signed by the president two days later. Its operative sections authorized the president to use armed force to assist any country in the Middle East that requested military assistance to ward off armed aggression by any state controlled by international Communism, so long as this was compatible with United States treaty obligations and the constitution.
3. See No. 37.

32. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to Ch. de Gaulle (Paris). 26 July 1958

Notes

1. Golda Meir's meeting with de Gaulle took place in early August; see No. 277.
2. Here and below, several paragraphs dealing with cooperation between Israel and the countries of the periphery have been omitted.
3. For de Gaulle's reply, see No. 275.

33. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 27 July 1958

Coded Tel. 450; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath requests permission to meet Macmillan and to propose to him the following: (1) Mutual recognition by Britain and Israel of the dangers facing the countries of the Middle East because of Nasser's scheming activities. (2) On that basis, the two countries to enter into discussions with the aim of consolidating their relations and studying the steps to be taken to counter Nasser's subversion. (3) It is preferable to discuss Jordan's future in the context of the general discussions between the two countries rather than as a separate subject. (4) In view of the situation, Israel's military power should be strengthened.

Elath requests comments on his proposals.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 13.
2. See No. 17 and No. 19.
3. Comay replied to Elath that his request for an interview had been approved, but the prime minister was asking him to focus the conversation on the question of arms supplies. He should also mention that Israel had yet to receive a response regarding its proposals, as had been promised in Macmillan's letter to Ben-Gurion (No. 18). There was no need for further clarifications, because the prime minister had made the matter quite clear in his talks with Rundall and there was no doubt that the latter had conveyed them precisely to London. (See Comay to Elath, telegram 379, 30 July 1958, 130.09/2322/1.)

34. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 31 July 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 139; Outg.: 130.09/2378/8

Eytan briefs the Missions on his meeting with Rundall, who informed him that the British have succeeded in opening a road from Aqaba and that the number of overflights will gradually decrease, though he cannot say when they will stop altogether. Eytan said that Israel has not yet heard anything from Britain about its proposals and requests. Rundall said he would give him information on that in due course.

Rundall briefed Eytan on the meeting of the Baghdad Pact countries. America's joining the Pact[1] was received with great satisfaction. As to whether Iraq will stay on as a partner in the pact–it was decided not to await an Iraqi approach, and should it request to stay on, consultations between all the partners would be in order. It was decided to transfer the pact's headquarters to Ankara. As for recognition of the Iraqi regime–all the Muslim members[2] wish to do so. The NATO Council approved recognition, therefore Britain will also extend its recognition. Eytan commented that his information is that there is no great enthusiasm for recognizing Iraq, and that Iran for one opposes it firmly.

On Israel's proposals, Rundall said that they were warmly received and that the delay in responding was caused by the heavy pressure on senior government circles. Israel's proposals for consolidating relations with Turkey and Iran look reasonable, and Britain is now taking steps in that direction. They have heard from Elath that Israel is mainly interested in naval weapons and equipment; a detailed list is hereby requested.

Rundall finally requested Israel's opinion on the situation in Jordan and in the region in general. Selwyn Lloyd has not yet received an answer to these questions from Elath. Eytan replied that Elath will transmit to Selwyn Lloyd a detailed analysis. For now, he does not think that Jordan will fight for its independence, and if it falls, Iraq or Egypt will enter the vacuum. Israel cannot permit Nasser's presence in Tulkarm.

Notes

1. In the event the United States did not join the Baghdad Pact, but committed itself to cooperation with its members (except for Iraq, whose membership was not formally terminated until 1959) to guarantee their defence and security against direct or indirect aggression.
2. Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan.

35. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 August 1958

Coded Tel. W118; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports on his meeting with Rountree, at which many subjects were discussed. With regard to the supply of arms he will write separately.[1] Eban conveyed Israel's opinion on the summit meeting,[2] namely, that it is a forum

for discussing the threat that Nasser constitutes against the territorial integrity and independence of small countries. He called on the Americans to keep to their present policy, adopted by them and Israel for months, namely: consolidating the status quo, guaranteeing the present boundaries, and supporting the principle of direct negotiations as the only way of solving the other issues.

Rountree replied he thinks it very important that Israel convey to the American government its ideas about the summit meeting within the next few days. As to the summit's agenda, he quoted the secretary of state's statement at a press conference, to the effect that general principles will be discussed touching the independence and territorial integrity of states, and the subject of subversion will also be raised.

A general discussion of the situation then followed. The state of affairs in Jordan bodes ill and the whole country is a barrel of dynamite. As to Iraq, the Americans have accepted the recommendations by Iran, Turkey, Asian states, and members of NATO to extend recognition to the new regime. Regarding Lebanon, the United States supports Shihab as President.

Notes

1. Rountree said that the secretary of state would soon reply to the prime minister's message regarding those sections not covered by the president's response. As for the arms request, this would be considered in the context of the president's letter to the prime minister (Eban to the M.F.A., W117, 31 July 1958, 130.09/2313/5).
2. See No. 29.

36. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 August 1958

Coded Tel. W119; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban cables the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs on the reactions in the United States to reports on contacts between Israel and the Soviet Union, including the prime minister's message to Khrushchev. Rountree told Eban that both the president and the secretary of state are mystified and cannot reconcile these contacts with the vigourous comments on Khrushchev in Ben-Gurion's letter to the president.

Eban replied that the report as published is misleading, and he told Rountree what he knew of Ben-Gurion's talk with Ambassador Bodrov.[2] To the best of his knowledge, there was no written message to Khrushchev.

Eban requests the Ministry to inform him immediately whether the version he gave Rountree accords with the facts, and whether a message has been sent to Khrushchev in addition to the talk with Bodrov; if the press report was garbled, should he issue a refutation and give the correct version of events?[4]

Notes

1. No. 27.
2. For the prime minister's conversation with Ambassador Bodrov, see No. 354.
3. Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther, president of the American Red Cross and a confidant of President Eisenhower.
4. In his reply, Ben-Gurion dismissed the report of a Note to Khrushchev as a "foolish invention." He repeated the details of his talk with Bodrov and added that he had still not received an answer from the Russians and was certain that none would be forthcoming. (See Ben-Gurion to the Israel embassy in Washington, W112, 1 August 1958, 130.02/2457/15.)

37. J.F. Dulles (Washington) to the Prime Minister. 1 August 1958

Notes

1. No. 27.
2. Indeed, the United States informed the leaders of the countries involved that it favoured a strengthening of their ties with Israel. (See Herzog to Shiloah, 29 August 1958, 130.09/2313/5.)
3. No. 33.

38. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 August 1958

Coded Tel. 863; Outg.: 130.09/2327/4

Avidar was summoned to Zorin a deputy foreign minister, who handed him a Note, the gist of which is: The Government of the Soviet Union finds it necessary to inform the Government of Israel that, from the commencement of the American and British military intervention in Jordan and Lebanon,

military planes of the United States and of Britain have been using Israel's airspace for the transport of troops and supplies to the occupation forces in Jordan, as well as for demonstrations of strength. Official persons in Britain have stated that Israel has given its unconditional consent to these overflights. This conduct on Israel's part makes it an accessory in the aggressive operations of Britain and the United States. The Government of the Soviet Union draws Israel's attention to the possible consequences of such a stand at a time of an increasing threat to peace in the Near and Middle East. The Government of the Soviet Union also finds it necessary to draw the attention of the Government of Israel to the fact that in putting its airspace at the disposal of Britain and the United States it bears responsibility for the increase in tension in the Middle East, which could develop into a conflict of most serious consequences to the national interests of Israel.

39. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 1 August 1958

Coded Tel. 864; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

Avidar reports on his first reaction to the Soviet Note.[1] He told Zorin that its content is surprising as there is no reason to see in Israel a direct or indirect accessory to the operations in Jordan and Lebanon and no responsibility whatsoever should be laid on it for the increase in tension in the region. He reminded Zorin that Israel had protested against the overflights, which eventually stopped following these protests. He also drew Zorin's attention to the prime minister's answer to questions in the Knesset.[2]

Zorin replied that the facts speak for themselves and that the Note was based on a statement by Macmillan.[3] Avidar replied that Macmillan had also mentioned Israel's protests, and Zorin should know that since these have made, Israel has not consented to the use of its airspace. Zorin said that he has no knowledge of the protests, and that if Israel wishes to reply to the Note and attempt to deny the facts–it is within its rights to do so.

Avidar recommends that a reply be sent as soon as possible.

Notes

1. No. 38.
2. On 29 July, M.K. Herzl Berger submitted a series of parliamentary interpellations,

including: "Is the government ready to propose to the great powers that they invite Israel and Egypt to peace talks?" To this the prime minister replied that "there is no great power in the West or East that does not know that we are ready to sit with every one of our neighbours or with all of them together, and without any preconditions, and establish peaceful relations among us that would be a blessing for us, for our neighbours, and for the entire region, on the basis of parity and reciprocity." (See *Divrei ha-Knesset,* Third Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXIV, p. 2425.)

3. When the House of Commons debated the landing in Jordan, on 17 July, Prime Minister Macmillan said that the Government of Israel had allowed the British planes that flew the troops to Jordan to cross its airspace.

40. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 August 1958

Coded Tel. W139; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban has had a meeting with Rountree, at which the Soviet Note[1] was discussed. Eban stressed the moral responsibility borne by the United States, which had urged Israel to agree to the airlift. This led to the conclusion that the supply of arms should be accelerated and that the United States should come out with an unequivocal statement that it would hasten to Israel's aid if the latter were attacked. Rountree said that America's support of Israel's independence and integrity is assured, and that the Soviet Union is well aware of it. Eban replied that the policy of the United States in the matter should be made clear to the Soviet Union at their next meeting. Rountree's answer was that the text of the American statement at the Security Council is now being drafted and that it would include, in all probability, the principles of America's policy.

Rountree then made it clear that the United States opposes the embargo in the form proposed by the Soviet Union.[2] As to the proposal to convene a summit meeting within the framework of the Security Council,[3] Rountree stressed that if matters affecting Israel are to be discussed then Israel will be invited to participate. At the moment it seems that Israel will not be invited, because it is not accused of aggression and there are no foreign troops stationed on its territory.

Notes

1. See Nos. 38 and 39.

2. One of the topics on the agenda of the summit conference proposed by the Soviet Union (see No. 21, n. 3) was the suspension of arms shipments to the Middle East.
3. The Security Council debated the crisis in the Middle East from 15 July to 7 August. No resolution emerged from the debate and it was decided to refer the question to a special session of the General Assembly. In the interchanges between the Soviet Union and the United States, the latter suggested holding the summit conference proposed by Khrushchev in the framework of the Security Council.

41. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London. 3 August 1958

Coded Tel. (Washington) W117; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

Comay briefs the embassies on Ben-Gurion's talk with Rundall. The latter said that the British wish to transfer to Jordan a battalion of Lines of Communications Troops to defend Aqaba and the lines of supply to Amman. The British government is therefore urgently asking Israel's permission to fly in this battalion over Israeli territory, in addition to the regular airlift of supplies.

The prime minister replied brusquely that Israel agreed at the start to the overflight of the troops, but it had no idea that this operation would be so prolonged. He feels he has overstretched his authority. Israel has just now been the recipient of a Note of protest from the Soviet Union. Israel takes this protest seriously and does not consider it a purely formal matter. It would be a crime against his people if he consented to further overflights; he therefore requests that Britain stop them without delay.

Rundall referred to the Soviet protest, and suggested that Israel's answer to their Note be delayed for twenty-four hours, that is, until after the government meeting, thus affording more time to the British. The prime minister rejected this proposal and said he is now drafting the reply, which will be despatched without delay once the government has approved it.

Rundall understood that further argument was useless and said he would cable to London that the prime minister had demanded that the flights be stopped absolutely.[2]

Immediately afterwards Comay met Lawson and briefed him on the talk with Rundall. He requested, in the prime minister's name, that the Americans also put an immediate and total stop to their flights over Israel. Lawson refrained from arguing and promised to cable this message to Washington without delay.

Notes

1. These telegrams contain a preliminary summary of the meetings with Rundall and Lawson (telegram to London, 393, 2 August 1958, 130.09/2322/1).
2. Randall phoned the director-general of the M.F.A. on 3 August and asked that Israel make no immediate response to the Soviet communication without first giving the British government an opportunity to confer with Israel. With regard to the flights he asked that the previous arrangements be continued and stated that he would have to request an urgent interview with the prime minister. Eytan replied that he had recorded these statements, but had no instructions permitting him to make further comments or to add to what the prime minister had told him the day before. (See Comay to the Israel embassies in Washington and London, W121, 3 August 1958, 130.09/2322/1). In fact, the British continued to overfly Israel in exceptional cases, always with prior permission from Israel.

42. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 August 1958

Coded Tel. W146; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports to the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs on his meeting with Secretary of State Dulles. The latter was very excited and said that the president and he himself were shocked by the report from Israel that it had decided to submit instantaneously to Soviet demands.[1] He said he attaches no particular importance to the new request by the British for the overflight of additional troops[2] and that he has no interest in it—the whole matter of the overflights is of secondary importance. The crux of the matter is Israel's frightened reaction to the Soviet Note. The Soviets send out numerous such notes and countries the world over regard them with unconcern. Israel's reaction radically changes the framework of relations between Israel and the United States. America's objective in its operations in Jordan and Lebanon is not so much for the sake of these countries themselves as to demonstrate to Soviet Union that there is a limit to Nasser's aggression and to defend the rights of the small countries. And here is Israel demonstrating weakness and panic because of a Note from Moscow.

Eban replied that the Secretary of State's interpretation of Israel's actions was erroneous. He repeated Ben-Gurion's words in his talks with Rundall and with Lawson: no other state has put itself in jeopardy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union as has Israel, and no other state is so lacking in guarantees. Israel is not Iceland or Luxembourg, whose security is guaranteed by the West, and

the Soviet Union can destroy it in five minutes. Moreover, Israel has been urging the British for three weeks now to find other routes of supply. Israel is not convinced that the flights over its territory are indeed so vital.

The secretary strongly criticized Ben-Gurion's assessment of Israel's security situation. The president's decisions are based on those of Congress, namely, that should Israel be attacked by the Soviet Union, the armed forces of the United States will come to its defence. This is the significance of the decision taken by Congress, and he does not understand why the prime minister finds it difficult to accept this basic fact.

Eban asked whether he is authorized to convey to the prime minister that, should Israel be attacked by the Soviet Union, the United States will go to war with the Soviets, and Dulles replied: Without the slightest doubt. He added that the Soviet Union is well aware of this and therefore the fears of a Soviet attack are groundless. The situation is that the United States has a commitment towards Israel to no smaller degree than towards any other country in the world, including the NATO countries, and if the Soviets attack it, America will come out fighting in its defence. This is the significance of the decision adopted by Congress, and America cannot go farther than that. The United States has no more categorical or explicit obligation towards any country in the world.

Other subjects discussed at the meeting are given in the Main Volume, pp. 73–74.

Notes

1. See Nos. 38 and 39.
2. See No. 41.
3. This was sent later in another telegram from Eban (see Eban to the M.F.A., telegram 188, 3 August 1958, 130.09/2321/5).

43. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 August 1958

Coded Tel. W148; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban adds his comments on the talk with Dulles.[1] This was the most crucial and fateful meeting he has ever had. The United States see Israel's stand as most problematic. Israel has been urging the United States for months now to demonstrate its power and support their landing in Lebanon and the

British operation in Jordan. Following its appeals, Dulles has dispatched to Israel a message in the president's name, which includes: a promise to help Israel in strengthening its ties with the peripheral countries; an in-depth analysis of Nasserism made in the spirit of Israel's conception of the phenomenon; an acknowledgement that Israel must maintain military forces able to deter any aggression originating in the region (this is a clear shift from their stand of two years ago); a promise to draw the necessary practical conclusions; and reiteration of the president's statement regarding the territorial integrity and independence of Israel. This message relates to Israel, for the first time, not as a burden which has to be borne out of compassion and necessity but as a spiritual, technical, and practical asset to the free world.[7] Against this background comes Israel's panic-stricken reaction. In Eban's opinion, the American's shock is deep and genuine, and there is no play-acting here to extort a consent to the overflights.

Eban's conclusion is that Israel's reply to Moscow is meaningless in the context of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union, and will have no influence whatsoever on Khrushchev. On the other hand, it does have significance in the context of relations with the United States. He has no doubt that America's commitments, as expressed in the latest messages, to the supply of arms and economic aid will be affected by Israel's reaction to the Soviet Note. Relations with Turkey and Iran will also be affected both by Israel's reaction and by America's attitude towards Israel. These countries' foreign policies are dependent on America, and any direct contacts with them will prove to be useless. He feels that Israel had been on the verge of a new era in its relations with the United States—and suddenly it is as if a door has closed. He therefore recommends that a message be sent immediately to the secretary of state. [For the text of the proposed message, see Main Volume, pp. 76-78.]

Notes

1. See No. 42.
2. See No. 1.
3. See No. 33.
4. See No. 29 and n. 6 there.
5. See No. 27.
6. See No. 36.
7. See Nos. 33 and 37.
8. For the final text of the communication, see No. 49.

44. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 August 1958

Coded Tel. W149; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban suggests the line to be taken in replying to the Soviet Note: the Soviets can be informed verbally that the flights have stopped or are about to stop, but in any written reply it is most important that Israel does not appear to be acknowledging the Soviets' right to interfere in its decisions or as having stopped the flights in response to the Soviet demand. He therefore proposes to delay the reply for several days and then stress that the United States, Britain, Jordan, and Lebanon are sovereign countries and it is not for Israel to judge their governments' decisions regarding the stationing of military forces; to emphasize that the Security Council has rejected the assumption that aggression or a threat to peace is involved; and to conclude by stating that Israel's actions are bound by the principles of the United Nations Charter and that all nations are free to adopt policies within the context of that Charter.

Note

1. See No. 43.

45. United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 4 August 1958

Coded Tel. W129; Outg.: 130.02/2450/9

The prime minister met with Lawson who began by presenting Dulles' reply to the message.[1] The prime minister stated that he had already received Eban's report on his meeting with Dulles[2], which so shocked him that he has not been able to consider a reply to his message. He is unable to understand what happened to give the impression that Israel has become so terrified of the Soviet Union that it has become subservient. He stated that from the beginning of the episode of the airlifts he explained the danger to Israel and requested the British and Americans not to expose Israel to political danger and perhaps even worse than that. Unfortunately, the matter of the overflights has become prolonged and from time to time further requests are received, and the last request for protection of supply routes did not seem to

him to be essential. Then came the Soviet Note. From the outset, Israel had no intention of treating it as a matter of urgency. Israel has not taken any steps that could serve as a reason for the outrage of the secretary of state and the president and it does not deserve to be harangued in the manner in which they had reacted. From the content of the conversation, it became apparent that the American politicians do not comprehend the very nature of the State of Israel, its democratic character, its desire for liberty, and the fact that it is most definitely in the West's camp.

Lawson replied by explaining that apparently there has been a misunderstanding that transpired from the impression that Israel was about to send a hasty reply to the Soviet Union only a few hours after it had received the Soviet Note. They thought Israel was about to announce that all the flights had been stopped and that this would be interpreted as a further Soviet victory in the Middle East.

The prime minister replied that even without the Soviet Note he would have demanded the cessation of the flights in keeping with his attitude to the flights from the outset, but had not managed to do so because of the Sabbath. And even if he had sent an immediate reply to the Soviets, the United States should be well enough acquainted with Israel to know that it would not easily succumb to threats in general and from the Soviet Union especially. The ambassador stated once again that efforts should be made to make amends for the misunderstanding in the light of the fact that the two countries were cooperating more closely in maters relating to the region. He added that the best way to do this was to allow the United States to continue to fly its supplies to the British for a few more days, obviously without publicity. As far as he is aware, the operation will end on the 6th of the month. The prime minister did not reply to this and repeated his stand regarding the overflights, on the nature of the State of Israel, and about what had been said and what should not have been said.

Notes

1. Message from Ben-Gurion to Eisenhower; see No. 27.
2. See No. 42. Eban informed Ben-Gurion that the reply had been sent to Lawson (see telegram 141, 3 August 1958, 130.09/2313/5).
3. See No. 41.
4. Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion met in Frankfurt in 1945. At the time Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe; Ben-Gurion was the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive.
5. See No. 33.
6. See No. 37.

7. The reference is to the Israeli reply to the Soviet Note of December 1957 on world peace. See No. 337 and n. 5 there; No. 339.

46. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 August 1958

Coded Tel. W155; Outg.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban addresses the telegram to the prime minister. He thinks the prime minister's reply to Lawson[1] was apposite, and he will repeat his words to Herter for transmission to the president and the secretary of state. He is making efforts to contain the crisis, but the reports in the press and also Comay's telegram to him,[3] which included the statement that Israel had stopped the flights in response to the Soviet protest, are making things more difficult.

The only way to defuse the crisis is to repeat firmly the prime minister's words to Lawson and to inform Dulles through Herter tomorrow that Israel will enable the Americans to complete the flights without hindrance, seeing that in any case these are about to stop within a few more days. He hopes that the expected message from the prime minister[5] will include these statements, and thus the misunderstanding will be cleared up and they will all be free to concentrate on the important matters referred to in the exchange of messages between the two governments. The meeting with Herter has been set for the following day at noon, and he hopes to receive by then the draft of the message.

Notes

1. See No. 45.
2. See No. 37.
3. No. 41.
4. The sentence is printed verbatim but is evidently corrupt.
5. For the prime minister's message, see No. 49.

47. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London. 4 August 1954

Coded Tel. W131; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

Comay reports on the prime minister's meeting with Rundall. The British ambassador urged Israel not to reply hastily to the Soviet Note and to reject the Soviet demands. Ben-Gurion replied that the Israeli answer will not be dispatched before next Sunday and maybe even later. It is going to be polite but firm, denying Soviet allegations and saying it is a matter between three sovereign states.

Rundall raised again the matter of overflights, asking for the continuation of the flights for few more days. Ben-Gurion reiterated his negative reply, particularly since the government has already rejected the British demand. He himself was not convinced of the absolute necessity of the flights. Should a change in the circumstances occur, he will raise the matter again with the government, but cannot guarantee an affirmative decision. Rundall said that this did not solve the British predicament. Comay will telegraph more details tomorrow.[1]

Note

1. Comay stated that the prime minister had approved the continuation of the American overflights for several more days, pursuant to his letter to the secretary of state, but that there had been no change with regard to the British. (See telegram 407, 6 August 1958, 130.09/2322/1.) For the aftermath of the British flights through Israeli airspace, see Chapter 10.

48. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 5 August 1958

Coded Tel. 245; Outg.: 130.09/2327/3

Levavi informs the embassy that the reply to the Soviet Note[1] will not be sent before the government meeting next Sunday. The view here is that there is no need of any special hurry, which might be construed by the Soviets as a sign of panic, especially as they based their protest on Macmillan's statement which came two weeks before they sent their Note. It is also possible that Israel's tactical situation will improve within the next few days.

Note

1. See No. 38.

49. D. Ben-Gurion [Jerusalem] to the U.S. Secretary of State (Washington). 5 August 1958

Notes

1. The text of the letter is based on Eban's proposal in No. 43, with slight modifications.
2. See No. 41.
3. No. 27.
4. See No. 42.
5. No. 33.

50. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 August 1958

Coded Tel. W158; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports having delivered the message to Herter,[1] who read it carefully and with satisfaction and promised to transmit it to the president and the secretary of state. He asked whom he should contact to discuss the renewal of the airlift, and Eban replied that the United States embassy should contact those who have been dealing with this issue up to now.

Herter then raised the public opinion aspect of the issue, saying the prevailing impression was that there were differences of opinion between Israel and the United States in connection with Israel's submission to the Soviet Note. He proposed that when Eban left his office he should say something to correct that impression and to suggest a picture of joint consultations and orderly handling of problems, with no link to the Soviet Note. Eban agreed to this proposal, also in view of the reactions in the Senate, and when he left he spoke to the press in that vein. He stressed that the United States and Israel had agreed all the time that the airlift operation was purely temporary, that the flights were about to stop in any case, and that the incident would be regarded as closed if agreement were reached on the terminal date of the overflights.[4]

Notes

1. No. 49.
2. Evidently Sen. William F. Knowland (Republican of California).
3. Sen. Jacob Javits (Republican of New York).
4. On 10 August, the U.S. liaison officer informed the Israel Air Force that the flights had been terminated as of that date. (See Comay's telegram to Israel embassies abroad, 10 August 1958, 130.09/2312/11.)
5. For Dulles's reply, see No. 53.

51. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister. 6 August 1958

Coded Tel. 24; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath reports on his meeting with Macmillan, who told him they are intending to invite the minister of foreign affairs to London in order to discuss all the current matters touching the Middle East and relations between Britain and Israel. He hoped that the talks will be held in a frank and friendly atmosphere, and mentioned the personal link that has developed between himself and the prime minister following their latest exchange of correspondence.[1]

Elath said he had not come to discuss current affairs but wished to devote the talk to the matter of the supply of arms to Israel. He gave Macmillan the list detailing Israel's requests.[2] Macmillan checked every item and showed good knowledge of the subject. He said it would not be fair for him to give a vague and noncommittal answer, and that he will have to discuss all the details with his military advisers. He promised to do so speedily. When Elath said that the Israeli experts would be prepared to contact the relevant bodies and officials to discuss the subjects informally and with no commitments, he did not respond to this suggestion and only repeated that he will deal with the issue without delay.

Macmillan then asked what was the nature of the guarantees requested by Israel from Britain. Elath replied that Israel is expecting an unequivocal declaration that Israel's independence and territorial integrity are guaranteed by the Western Powers, just as those of Iran and Turkey. Macmillan asked in what way this guarantee would differ from the Three Powers' declaration,[3] and Elath replied that the difference was both qualitative and quantitative, namely, that the guarantees must be clear and explicit and that they should be buttressed first of all by taking the practical steps implied, including the supply of arms. Not all of these elements can be found in the

Three Powers' declaration. Macmillan replied that on this matter he will have to work in close cooperation with the United States.

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of current affairs in the Middle East and of Nasser's ambitions and actions. The issue of the overflights was not mentioned at all.

Notes

1. No 18.
2. The list has not been located in M.F.A. files. From the record of the meeting preserved in the files of the British Prime Minister's Office, it seems that the Israeli arms request was as follows: 200 Centurion tanks, 300 half-tracks, guided missiles, both anti-tank and anti-aircraft, three squadrons of fighter planes and two of bombers, and two submarines. (See the British record of the meeting, PRO, PREM11/2375/10465, 6 May 1958.)
3. See No. 16 and n. 2 there.

52. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister. 7 August 1958

Coded Tel. 560; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath comments on his meeting with Macmillan.[1] His impression is that the British wishes to hold a general discussion that will show that they are prepared to conduct talks but not to take any practical steps. While Elath tried to focus the conversation on the supply of arms and the guarantees, Macmillan reverted all the time to current affairs in the region. Lloyd used the same tactics in his last talks with Elath. Elath does not detract from the importance even of such general discussions, and Israel might come out of them with some gains in the supply of arms, but he feels that there will be no progress until there is a radical shift in British policy.

Notes

1. See No. 51.
2. The reference may be to Secretary of State Dulles.
3. The meeting between Foreign Minister Golda Meir and Selwyn Lloyd took place on 11 August 1958; see No. 302.

53. J. F. Dulles [Washington] to the Prime Minister. 10 August 1958

Notes

1. See No. 49.
2. See No. 42.

54. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 11 August 1958

Coded Tel. 252; Outg.: 130.09/2327/3

Levavi transmits to the embassy the text of Israel's reply to the Soviet Note, which is to be handed the same day to the Soviet ambassador to Israel. In the message Israel rejects the Soviet arguments, and stresses that the flights were carried out with the agreement of the Jordanian government and that they were intended to be of short duration, until alternative routes were found. The reply then deals with the situation in the Middle East and states that the Government of Israel is convinced that the tension in that region is caused by subversive activities of strong states against weaker ones. The tension is aggravated by the lack of resolution of the United Nations in enforcing the principles of the Charter binding all member nations to refrain from any threats against peace and to settle their conflicts with other nations by peaceful means.[2] Israel reiterates its willingness to meet the representatives of all the Arab states on an equal basis, together or separately, for direct negotiations on a peace settlement and on cooperation, and expresses its regrets that no response has been forthcoming to this proposal, which has been put forward in the past. The letter also refers to the exchange of correspondence at the end of 1957 between Israel and the Soviet Union,[3] and reiterates Israel's agreement with the opinion of the Soviet Union as expressed in its letter of 1957, that relations between states should be grounded on mutual respect of their territorial integrity and independence, and on the principles of non-aggression and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. The letter concludes with the expression of hope that the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly[4] will take steps in support of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 38.
2. The reference is to two Security Council resolutions that called on Egypt to end its restrictions on the free passage of ships and goods to Israel through the Suez Canal.
3. On 10 December 1957 the Soviet Union sent a Note to Israel (and other countries) on the theme of strengthening peace in the world in general, and in the Middle East in particular. Israel's reply was forthcoming on 19 January 1958; see No. 339.
4. See Editorial Note, No. 55.
5. For the Soviet reply, see No. 355.

55. Editorial Note

The Security Council and General Assembly Debates on the Crisis in the Middle East

On 15 July 1958, the Security Council convened in emergency session to discuss the situation in the Middle East, at the request of the Government of the United States. After stormy and protracted debates, the Council proved unable to adopt any resolution and accordingly referred the matter to an emergency session of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly met from 8 to 21 August, when it adopted a resolution submitted by the ten Arab states that were members of the U.N. at the time. Its main points were as follows: The General Assembly welcomed the fact that the Arab countries, which were bound by the collective security pact of the Arab League to respect one another's sovereignty, had renewed their commitment to this obligation. The secretary-general was asked to make practical arrangements, in consultation with the relevant governments and in accordance with the United Nations Charter, aimed at sustaining the principles of the Charter with regard to Lebanon and Jordan and at facilitating the early withdrawal of foreign forces from these two countries. (See *Yearbook of the United Nations,* 1958, pp. 46–47.)

This resolution paved the way for the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Lebanon and the British forces from Jordan in October 1958.

56. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 14 January 1958

Coded Tel. 130.09/2312/10

At a meeting with Ambassador Lawson, at which the minister of finance and Shiloah were also present, the minister of foreign affairs expressed her dissatisfaction about the delay in discussing Israel's request for the loan. The suspension of the Benot Yaaqov project[1] and the postponement of other development projects is bad for the economy; there are several settlements that do not have a steady supply of water. The budget debate in the government is drawing to a close and the budget proposal has to be submitted to the Knesset very soon. The minister of finance does not know whether or not to include the loan in the development budget. Israel's request for the loan is not being kept a secret, and questions will be asked why development projects have been suspended. The minister of finance will be faced with the choice of hiding the truth or strongly criticizing the United States.

Lawson asked whether it would be correct to assume that, in view of this development, public opinion in Israel might exert pressure on the government to resume the diversion works at Benot Yaaqov. Mrs. Meir said that this would be the public's natural reaction, in addition to the creation of an atmosphere of severe criticism among the people and in the Knesset. She added that the impression has been created that the United States is delaying the matter until the Arabs received similar aid. Israel has never suggested that economic aid be withheld from the Arab countries; the contrary is true, but she refuses to postpone development projects in order to create an artificial balance with the Arab states. In view of the favourable report by the experts,[2] Israel cannot view the delay in approving the loan otherwise than as a political action, giving in to Arab pressure.

Lawson replied that he is not aware of the reason for the delay, and he has already cabled Washington calling for an urgent decision. He will cable again, and hopes that his telegram would arrive before Eban's meeting with Herter.[4]

Notes

1. See Introduction, p. xvi.
2. In July 1957, the Export-Import Bank sent a delegation to Israel for an on-site investigation of Israel's request for a loan, after which it submitted its findings to the management of the bank. See also No. 57.

3. The United States Operations Mission—the executive arm for American assistance to Israel.
4. See No. 57.
5. The reference is to the visit to Israel and Jordan by Francisco Urrutia, Hammarskjöld's representative, in December 1957-January 1958, to discuss matters related to Mt. Scopus. See Chapter 6.
6. This document has not been found.

57. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 January 1958

Coded Tel. W305; Inc.: 130.09/2312/15

Eban reports on his meeting with Herter. He opened the meeting by saying that the issue of the loan is not a new one and that it has a deep-rooted and complex background, from which it follows that the Government of the United States has a moral commitment towards Israel. He reviewed the chain of developments from the point where the diversion works were suspended, quoted Dulles's words and promises and those of Herter, Lawson, and others following the Suez War and Israel's withdrawal. Everyone affirmed that this withdrawal would result in an improvement of relations. He also referred to the dispatch of the experts' mission in April 1957 and the promise that its report would be decisive in the matter. The mission has come and gone, and its report is not unfavourable. In light of the above, Israel's disappointment should be seen as natural—especially after Waugh had said that the delay in approving the loan was caused by the Department of State. The delay will have adverse effects from both the economic and the political points of view. It will harm Israel's economy and put off the attainment of the hoped-for economic independence, and it will undermine the mutual trust on which relations between the United States and Israel were based.

Herter replied that the ambassador's impression that there has been an unfavourable decision is incorrect. The matter has not been closed. There are deep differences of opinion in the Bank itself regarding the technical and economic aspects, so that the vote, if taken now, would be unfavourable. The Bank has therefore approached the Department of State, asking whether there is in its opinion "an overriding political reason" why the loan should be approved, in spite of the doubts prevalent in the Bank. The Department of State does not oppose granting the loan, but the problem now is that, if the definition of "compelling political reasons" held, then the

Department has to take into account all the political data on this issue. In this connection, the ambassador was requested to clarify two points:

1. Whether the loan has to do with the wish for and the prospect of massive immigration, for instance from the Soviet Union.

2. Whether the loan will increase Israel's ability to help in the solution of the refugee issue.

Eban replied that he is prepared to answer any question, but that he has to warn against the danger of making this aid, or any other aid, dependent on political issues between the United States and other countries. Herter replied that the Department of State is definitely against the idea of attaching political strings to this or other loans, but, seeing that the Bank is reluctant to approve the loan for economic reasons, a political decision has become necessary. This was why he is requesting the ambassador to adopt a positive attitude towards the questions asked.

Eban replied that Israel's economic plans have no connection at all with its hope of liberating the Jews of the Soviet Union. They are based on present economic circumstances and are intended to improve the situation of the present inhabitants, including the Arabs living in Israel. As to the refugee issue, Israel's position is well known, and it would be willing to play its part in an international regional settlement.

Herter summed up by saying that it would be useful if Israel submitted a memorandum[1] reviewing in detail the history of its request for the loan, pointing to the adverse effects on Israel's economy should the loan not be approved, and stressing that it is intended to help the existing population and has no connection with other prospects. In addition, it would be desirable to have a statement, if Eban considered himself authorized to provide one, to the effect that "the development stimulated by the loan will assist Israel's capacity to help Arab refugees". Eban replied that he would consult with his government and would prepare the memorandum with all urgency. He will then ask for another meeting at the Department of State.[2]

Eban is sending separately additional comments on the talk.[3]

Notes

1. The memorandum, dated 21 January 1958, is in File 130.19/5964/6.
2. On 28 January Eban met with Herter, who said that relations between the State Department and the Export-Import Bank were a sensitive issue, because the bank was proud of its independent status. In any case, the State Department wanted to make it clear that should the bank determine that the program was economically and financially feasible, the Department would have no reservations whatsoever about it. (See Eban to the M.F.A., W344, 28 January 1958, 130.09/2312/6.)

3. In a telegram (W307, 15 January 1958), Eban listed the positive and negative factors affecting the prospects of Israel's loan request. He summarized that there was no doubt that the State Department and president of the Export-Import Bank had decided on a protracted and indefinite deferment, but pressure by Israel's friends and the talks in Israel and in Washington had evidently led Herter, who was looking for a practical way out, to reconsider. It was against this background that the requested memorandum should be drafted. Eban asked whether it would be possible to include in the memorandum Herter's remarks about the possibility that Israel's capacity to help solve the refugee problem would be enhanced if the loan strengthened its economy. The foreign minister replied in the negative, while noting that in oral exchanges it was possible to reiterate the position of the Government of Israel regarding the refugees, a position that had been set and announced prior to the negotiations about the loan; Israel insisted that the issue of the refugees must not be linked with the loan. (See telegram TNW927, 19 January 1958, 130.09/2312/10.)

58. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 February 1958

Notes

1. No. 189. The reference seems to be to the first part of the conversation, a report on which is found only in the American records. According to these, the participants talked about Israel's tenth-anniversary celebrations and the American anxiety that the celebrations would intensify the disagreements concerning the status of Jerusalem. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 11, pp. 28-29.)
2. Samansky was the representative of the Food and Agricultural Organization (F.A.O.) in Jordan and worked on the East Ghor project.

59. J. Herzog (Washington) to the United States Division. 4 March 1958

Coded Tel. W495; Inc.: 130.09/2312/6

Herzog has been discussing with the Export and Import Bank the draft of the announcement on the approval of a $24 million loan.[1] They have agreed to omit the section referring to "the availability of water", thus avoiding the prospect of Israel's being refused the grant of an additional loan on the grounds that there is no proof as to the availability of additional water. Herzog has cabled the final draft of the announcement to the United States

Division (see Main Volume, p. 105), noting that he has not succeeded in having the section in parentheses referring to the Yarmuk project[3] omitted. He requests that no preliminary announcement or briefing be given to the press in Israel, in accordance with the arrangements he has made in Washington.

Notes

1. With regard to approval of the loan to Israel for developing water resources. The loan was approved after friends of Israel brought pressure to bear. Eisenhower, too, was among those who exerted pressure. (See Eban to the M.F.A., W392, 6 February 1958, 130.09/2312/6.)
2. The actual size of the loan was $24.2 million.
3. On U.S. assistance for the East Ghor project in Jordan, see No. 58.

60. G. Meir (Accra)[1] to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 March 1958

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2291/4

Mrs. Meir fears that Dulles may have made the approval of the loan conditional on Israel's putting off indefinitely the work on the Jordan project. She is aware of the importance of this loan, but thinks it may have been preferable not to accept the money and to state instead that Israel would complete the Jordan project, seeing that the Jordanian Ghor project is being carried out with American support.[2]

Notes

1. At the time, Golda Meir was on an African tour.
2. For Ben-Gurion's reply, see No. 62.

61. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 7 March 1958

Coded Tel. TNW117; Outg.: 130.02/3691/4

At a consultation with the prime minister and the minister of finance,[1] it was decided that Eban would transmit to the secretary of state or to Herter the following message:

1. American support of the Ghor project without similar support of the Israeli project is regarded by Israel as a breach of the gentlemen's agreement, which has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the United States government at all the talks held over the last few years.

2. It does not stand to reason that the Jordanians should work on the Yarmuk project without Israel being able to work on the Benot Yaaqov (Jordan) project. As soon as work on the Yarmuk project commences, Israel will consider itself free to work on the Jordan project and to pump water from the river.

3. In giving its consent to the Johnston Plan, Israel made clear its agreement in principle to regional water and development plans being carried out, with the aim of solving the refugee problem and contributing to internal stability of the countries concerned, but at the same time it has to insist on its basic rights.

4. Israel therefore requests that negotiations immediately commence on receiving American aid for the Jordan project such as is being given to the Jordanian project.

5. Wiener is coming to Washington with a plan for pumping water from the Jordan outside the limits of the Demilitarized Zone. This plan should be submitted to the Americans, while stressing that its completion will take several years, and that no work in the Demilitarized Zone is being contemplated at present.

Efforts should be made in the meantime to have the loan finalized, while insisting that it should not be bound up with the Jordan-Yarmuk complex.[2]

Notes

1. See also Ben-Gurion's diary entry for 7 March 1958 (Ben-Gurion Archives).
2. Eban replied that he would raise the issue with Herter and argue that the United States had an obligation to help Israel with the Jordan River project, just as it was supporting the Yarmuk project. No report on this meeting has been located, but it is known from American sources that a meeting was held on 27 March, at which time it was agreed that Israel would submit it comments in the form of a note to the State Department. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 14, pp. 31-35.)

62. D. Ben-Gurion [Jerusalem] to the Israel Embassy in Accra. 9 March 1958

Coded Tel. 257; Outg.: 130.09/2291/1

Ben-Gurion thanks Mrs. Meir for her telegram[1] and wishes to inform her that her reservations has been taken into account in the discussions held on the loan issue in Jerusalem.[2] Israel will oppose all attempts to represent the loan as counterbalancing the Yarmuk project. Instructions have been accordingly given to Eban to insist on the strict separation of the loan from Israel's Jordan waters project, and to insist that the United States government hold discussions with Israel on the commencement of work on that project.

Notes

1. See No. 60.
2. See No. 61.

63. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 April 1958

Coded Tel. WA579; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

The embassy has submitted the memorandum on the water issue,[1] and Rockwell promised on that occasion that America's agreement to the diversion of the Yarmuk was and remains conditional on Israel's interests not being harmed in respect of the quantities of water and its salinity. Their intentions have certainly not been "malign". He added that if the data in the memorandum convince them that matters are taking a different turn, they will not hesitate to acknowledge the fact. He promised to study the memorandum and to continue discussing the subject.

Notes

1. See No. 64.
2. See No. 61 and n. 2 there.
3. In the wake of disputes between King Saud and his brother, Crown Prince Faisal, on 24 March the king was forced to grant his brother full powers in domestic, foreign, and economic affairs.

64. Israel Embassy in Washington to the U.S. Secretary of State (Washington). [2 April 1958]

Notes

1. See No. 61 and n. 2 there.
2. For the U.S. reaction, see No. 65 and No. 66.

65. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 1 August 1958

Coded Tel. W124; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports on the Department of State's reply to Israel's memorandum on the Ghor project.[1] The document *in extenso*, is sent by bag.[2] The American reply states that the Jordanian project was planned with a view of incorporating it into a coordinated multinational project. Jordan has committed itself not to pump out more water than has been allotted to it in the Johnston Plan. As to the problem of salinity, representatives of the United States are prepared to meet with representatives of Israel on that issue. This said, the Government of the United States does not accept the principle that a decision to help one friendly state obliges it automatically to extend its help to another. On the other hand, the Government of Israel must be aware of the interest of the United States in helping it develop its water resources. The readiness of the Government of the United States to extend its aid also in the future to water projects within the Armistice lines will depend on the nature of the projects and on Israel's needs.

Eban's conclusion is that Israel should submit its plan to the Americans and initiate discussions on the salinity problem. He requests instructions as soon as the Division is in possession of the complete text of the American reply.[3]

Notes

1. No. 64.
2. No. 66.
3. No reply by the M.F.A. has been found; but see No. 67.

66. U.S. Secretary of State (Washington) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 1 August 1958

Notes

1. No. 64.
2. For Israel's reply, see No. 67.

67. Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the U. S. Secretary of State (Washington). 28 January 1959

Notes

1. Herzog, who transmitted the Note, cabled the M.F.A. that for the moment its existence should be kept confidential, since rumour had it that the Arabs were keeping tab on the affair. (See his telegram W691, 28 January 1959, 130.09/2313/7.)
2. No. 64.
3. No. 66.

68. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 February 1959

Coded Tel. NWT219; Inc.: 130.09/2339/11

Eban reports on his talk with Dillon. The ambassador repeated the contents of Israel's Note of 28 January[1] and stressed Israel's request for a speedy and favourable decision. Israel's main concern is the completion of its Jordan waters project as a counterweight to the Yarmuk project, the latter constituting a unilateral action which ignored the rights of one of the parties concerned. The completion of the Israeli project that will restore the balance that was achieved in the negotiations on the Johnston Plan.

Dillon replied that the Israeli plan is still under discussion, their aim being to compare the proposed project with the conditions enumerated in the secretary of state's letter to Eban.[2] The Administration has already succeeded in having a loan granted to Israel from the Development Loan Fund on account of the balances remaining for the financial year 1958, and he hopes that by the end of March or the beginning of April the Department

of State will succeed in obtaining more money for the Development Loan Fund from Congress. This, he thinks, is the context in which Israel's proposal should be discussed. Today's talk showed him that Israel clearly gives priority to the Jordan plan over the other projects it wishes the United States to finance, and this will be taken into consideration. He has instructed Shaw to study again Israel's memorandum in depth; Shaw said that he would be able to form a definite opinion only after a joint examination of Israel's proposals.

Notes

1. No. 67.
2. No. 66.

69. A. Eban [Washington] to Ch. Herter (Washington). 4 May 1959

Note

1. In this conversation, Eban said that Israel did not want the United States to manage and execute the Jordan River project as it was doing for the Jordanian Yarmuk project. It was interested only in financial assistance to enable it to acquire the equipment needed to perform the work. Herter sought to clarify whether the work being planned by Israel could make a positive contribution if the Johnston Plan were revived, or whether it would turn out that much more money had been spent than would have been necessary had the coordinated project been carried out. (See Eban to the M.F.A., WNT669, 23 April 1959, 130.09/2314/8.) Dillon, too, raised this question in his meeting with Eban that same day (see Eban to the M.F.A, WNT670, 23 April 1959, ibid.).

70. Note from the U.S. Secretary of State (Washington) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 7 May 1959

Notes

1. No. 67.
2. No. 64.
3. For Israel's response, see No. 73. See also No. 72.

71. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 May 1959

Coded Tel. 972; Inc.: 130.09/2313/8

Eban reports on his meeting with Rountree, at which he briefed the latter on his talk with the secretary of state.[1] Rountree said that the Department of State is of the opinion that Israel should put more trust in its relations with the United States than has been shown by certain circles in Israel.

The talk then turned to the water issue. Rountree said that the Israeli proposal of 2 January[2] is now being studied. The United States is guided by its support of the "unified and coordinated development" for the benefit of all the countries concerned. The United States will also support isolated national projects on condition that they do not "jeopardize prospects of eventual unified coordinated development". The Department of State is of the opinion that the Jordanian Ghor project answers to that condition, and its impression is that the same is true for the Beit She'an project.[3] However, there are certain doubts about Israel's Benot Yaaqov Jordan project, the fear being that it would increase the salinity downstream and that the stated planned quantities of water to be pumped—150 to 180 million c.m.—are only a prelude to the pumping of larger quantities.

Rountree added the following clarifications: (1) That Israel's request for the financing of the Beit She'an project will considered in a favourable spirit owing to its clear analogy with the Ghor project. (2) That Israel can submit additional plans, which should however conform with the principle of not obstructing the regional plan.

Rountree then gave Eban a Memorandum which contained all the above formulations.[4]

Eban's impression is that Israel's plan is considered by the Americans to be too ambitious and more extensive than the plan that they had approved for Jordan and that had moved Israel to submit its own proposal. That is why the Department of State persists in referring to the Beit She'an project, which serves to demonstrate that it is not opposing Israel's water plans in principle, while at the same time being able to defer its approval of the larger plan. Certain officials of the Department have been advising Eban to go forward by stages, and at this stage to concentrate only on the Beit She'an project. Some of them also hinted at the possibility of Israel getting more financial aid for other enterprises, which would enable it to complete the larger water plan from its own resources.

Eban recommends that negotiations commence on the Beit She'an project, which would break the ice on aid connected with the Jordan waters,

and to act simultaneously on the larger project while gaining the support of Israel's friends. In any case, he thinks any agitation is superfluous, and that Israel should confine itself at the present stage to diplomatic action and not to involve public opinion.

Notes

1. See No. 69, n. 1.
2. See No. 67.
3. To carry water from the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) to the Beit She'an Valley and compensate the settlements there for the loss of water from the Yarmuk that would result from the Jordanian East Ghor project.
4. No. 4.

72. A. Manor (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affair. 19 May 1959

Coded Tel. NWT363; Inc.: 130.09/2339/12

Manor supplements Eban's telegram on the Jordan project.[1] Following additional talks with the Department of State, his impression is that their attitude is that the arguments about the salinization and the doubts about the Yarmuk-Lake of Tiberias channel through the Demilitarized Zone are not at the heart of the matter and discussions about these issues are of no importance. Neither does the Department have any doubts about the technical feasibility of incorporating Israel's project in the Johnston Plan, if and when this plan is realized. Their objections are mainly political: they think that if Israel's plans were approved and all its needs for water resources were satisfied, then it would no longer need any agreements with its neighbours. The United States, on the other hand, wishes to make any help given to Israel conditional on an Israeli-Jordanian agreement. During the talks, hints were dropped a number of times that Israel should initiate contacts with the Jordanians, and the suggestion was made that it should approach Black of the World Bank to act as an intermediary, as he did in Egypt's dispute with Sudan over the Nile waters.

Notes

1. No. 71.
2. The document has not been traced.

73. Note from the Chargé d'Affaires of Israel in Washington to the Acting U.S. Secretary of State (Washington). 17 July 1959

Notes

1. Jacob Herzog served as *chargé d'affaires a.i.* between Abba Eban's return to Israel and the arrival of his successor, Avraham Harman.
2. No. 70.
3. No. 69.
4. A memorandum attached to the Israeli Note, headed "The Yarmuk Project of the Kingdom of Jordan and Israel's Jordan Project", has been omitted here. For the U.S. reply to the Israeli Note, see No. 78.

74. A. Wiener (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U. N. 13 August 1959

Coded Tel. Y369; Outg.: 130.09/2333/17

Wiener sums up his talk with Shaw. For the next two years, Israel will reduce its demands in respect of the western part of the Jordan project, that is, the part between the Jezre'el Valley and Tel Aviv. In a year or two, when the Jordanian project has advanced, Israel will increase its demand and will also include the eastern part of the Jordan project between Lake Tiberias and the Valley. The cost of the reduced part will require some two thirds of the overall investment, that is \$5m–\$6m annually, for the next two years. The plan will be submitted this week to the American embassy for transmission to Washington. Shaw's attitude seemes favourable and he hopes Lawson would be of like mind.

Note

1. The document has not been traced.

75. A. Manor (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 August 1959

Coded Tel. X415; Inc.: 130.09/2334/8

In reply to Wiener's telegram of 13 August,[1] Manor informs him that he intends to submit next Tuesday to the director of the Development Loan Fund a preliminary review of the reduced plan, which he calls "The Central Israel Water Conduit". He will make it clear that the conduit would carry Jordan water in the future, but for the time being it would carry underground water from the Western Galilee and the Sharon, this being essential for flexible and efficient exploitation of all the water resources of Israel. The overall investment in the conduit from Beit Netofa to the Yarqon-Negev pipeline would be some IL65m, including approximately IL27.5m in foreign currency. Israel will need $12m before the end of the 1960/61 financial year. Manor requests urgent comments on the above.[2]

Notes

1. No. 74.
2. Wiener replied that the argument advanced in Manor's telegram hit the nail on the head and the name of the project would be modified in all documents, as per his suggestion. In another telegram he added that the foreign currency investment in the Central Water Conduit was $15 million, of which $6 million was for the first year of construction, 1960/61. The money was always required about six months before the start of the fiscal year, so that sum was needed soon. He suggested submitting the Beit She'an project separately. (See his telegrams to Manor, Y375, 16 August 1959, 17/2333/130.09; TNW469, 17 August 1959, 130.09/2340/2.)

76. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 October 1959

Coded Tel. WNT876; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Harman reports on a meeting with Dillon, at which Eshkol gave him details on the state of the Israeli economy at the beginning of the second decade of its existence. There are indications that the gap in the balance of payments is closing, and there is hope that the new [economic] plan now being drafted will further Israel's progress towards economic independence. The planners are basing themselves on known data, but a certain element is still unclear,

namely, water resources. Israel has already achieved a great deal in this respect, but now the country is thirsty for water. The exploitation of the water in the north is unavoidable and of immediate urgency. The Central Israel Water Conduit will also help in diverting surplus water from Western Galilee to the south.

Dillon replied that their experts are checking the details and that their conclusions will be made available in a fortnight's time.

Note

1. See No. 75.

77. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 November 1959

Coded Tel. RI379; Inc.: 130.09/2313/10

Harman reports on a meeting at the Department of State on the subject of water, at which he was handed a Note[1] requesting clarification of certain aspects of the Israeli plan. Herter stated orally that the United States is glad to find that Israel is of the same mind as the Americans in accepting the necessity of a "unified plan". They think that the Jordanian plan conforms with this conception. However, they have their doubts about the Israeli plan. Their understanding of certain points differs from that of Israel, and that is why they have requested that Wiener meet with their experts.[2] Harman agreed to that, and stressed again the importance and urgency of water planning for the country. It was also agreed to discuss the Central Conduit plan, but the Americans said this would be a purely technical discussion that would not touch on matters of principle.

It is obvious that their attitude towards the Central Conduit will depend on the experts' conclusions.

Notes

1. No. 78.
2. See No. 79.

78. Note from the U.S. Secretary of State (Washington) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 19 November 1959

Notes

1. No. 73.
2. No. 70.
3. No. 66.
4. See No. 79.
5. The question of this Note was raised, along with other issues, in a meeting between Harman and Herter on 20 November. Harman said that he was confident that the experts' talks would show that there was agreement between Israel and the United States, but complained that the impression had been created that the United States did not ascribe equal weight to the guarantees provided by Israel and Jordan: whereas it unhesitatingly accepted the Jordanian assurances it was sceptical about Israel's statements that there was no contradiction between its water-resources project and Johnston's regional plan. Meyer, who was present at the meeting, replied that they were doing everything they could to assist Israel and would pursue their inquiries further. He also praised the Central Water Conduit plan, which contributed to alleviating their political difficulties. (For the full conversation, see No. 243.)

79. A. Wiener and M. Erell (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 November 1959

Coded Tel. RI385; Inc.: 130.09/2313/10

Wiener and Erell report on the meeting with the American experts, at which the two subjects discussed were the Jordanian Ghor project and Israel's water plans.

From the details of the Jordanian project it appears that Israel's supply of water will not be endangered in rainy years, but a shortage is to be expected in years of drought, although the Jordanians have promised to take upon themselves part of the shortage. The experts also admitted the danger of increased salinization in the Jordan, but argued that Israel could offset this by increasing the flow from Lake Tiberias. Consequently, Wiener has given instructions that the proposed timetable for the Lake Tiberias–Beit She'an project be reconsidered. The American experts admit that the Ghor project cannot be advanced beyond the present stage without infringing on the legitimate rights of Israel, unless a reservoir is built on the upper Yarmuk.

The experts are convinced that the Department of State's pronouncement in its latest Note[1] to the effect that the Israeli plan does not conform to the Johnston Plan is groundless. It appears that most of the Department's reservations are based on misunderstandings. One problem, however, remains: the amount of water from the Jordan that Israel should allocate to the Jordanians. It appeared that there is a discrepancy of 28 million cu.m. between Johnston's "memorandum of understanding" and the analogous Jordanian document. The Department of State's experts want to point out this discrepancy but refuse to do so in writing. The Israelis replied that they are bound by one document only, namely the Johnston document, and that the problem of the 28 million cu.m. is in any case academic at this stage.

In informal talks, Meyer agreed that aid for the Beit She'an conduit should not be considered as analogous to aid for the Ghor project. Wahl said that the Central Conduit plan is a step in the right direction, but he is concerned about the discrepancy between the amount of aid requested by Israel and that given to the Jordanians.

Wiener and Erell conclude that there are good prospects that aid will be given for the Central Conduit, but Israel may be required to give guarantees and undertakings in respect of adherence to the principles of the Johnston Plan.

Notes

1. No. 78.
2. At the meeting, Meyer said that the Criddle Report completed the technical investigation in the spirit of the Israeli position. He hinted that they had no technical reservations about the Israel plan. At the same time he maintained that it would be premature to say this explicitly, because approval at a higher level was required. He presented a number of questions to Erell. (See Erell to the M.F.A, WNT949, 3 December 1959, 130.09/2314/9.) On 7 December, Erell provided satisfactory answers to these questions. At that meeting Meyer referred to the outbursts from Cairo on the water issue, but did not express any concern about them. (See the Israel Embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., WNT952, 7 December 1959, ibid.)

80. Editorial Note

Arab Reactions to the Israeli Water Schemes

In the autumn of 1959 the Arab countries' attention was drawn once again to Israel's water projects, because of progress in the negotiations for U.S. aid

for these projects and also because the issue was raised in the campaign preceding the Israeli elections on 3 November 1959.

At the meeting of the Arab League Council, held in Casablanca in September 1959, the Saudi Arabian delegate raised the issue of the diversion of the Jordan River by Israel. It was decided to set up a committee, with representatives from the U.A.R., Jordan, and Lebanon, to study the problem and submit recommendations. Presented on 26 December 1959, these called for the Arab states to take all required measures to prevent Israel from implementing its "aggressive plans".

On 17 January 1959, Prime Minister al-Majali of Jordan called for coordinated Arab action to prevent implementation of the Israeli plan. He said that inter-Arab consultations were under way on the subject of a joint Arab protest in the international arena concerning the "infringement of Arab rights".

On 2 December 1959, Radio Cairo broadcast a report that the Foreign and War Ministries of the United Arab Republic were consulting with the military secretariat of the Arab League concerning measures to prevent Israel from carrying out its Jordan River project. Reliable sources in Cairo hinted that implementation of the project would entail immediate military action. In a broadcast on 5 December, Radio Cairo said that Nasser had demanded an urgent report on countermeasures to the "Israeli plot" to divert the Jordan. Two "important meetings" had been held in Cairo and Damascus to discuss the question.

The Arabs' intentions to prevent Israel from carrying out the plan to divert the Jordan proceeded on two axes: military action and engineering works to divert the sources of the Jordan, located in Lebanon and Syria. No such activity was carried out during the period covered by the present volume.

When Israel complained to the U.N. secretary-general about the Arab threats, its representatives were told that the Arabs were weighing an appeal to the Security Council; but this, too, was never done.

81. J. Tsur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 8 December 1959

Coded Circular Telegram 40; Outg.: 130.09/2378/2

Information to be given out by Israel on the activity of the U.A.R. in connection with the water plans[1] will be on the following lines: (1) There is

nothing new in Israel's plans, which conform to the Johnston Plan. (2) Nor is there anything new in the U.A.R.'s continuous attempts during the last few years to harm Israel's interests by whatever means available; now they are bearing down on the water plans. Their plans for diverting the sources of the Jordan are purely destructive and are economically meaningless. (3) The object of the activity on the Syrian borders is to divert attention from the anti-U.A.R. agitation in Syria and to serve for Nasser as a pretext to meddle in Jordan as well. (4) Israel will oppose any attempt to infringe on its rights.

Note

1. See Editorial Note, above.

82. M. Comay (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 9 December 1959

Coded Tel. NWT934; Inc.: 130.02/3690/6

Comay reports on his talk with Bunche on the Arabs' activity in respect of the water plans. Bunche said that the U.N. secretary-general had spoken that day with Fawzi,[1] who had protested against Israel's water plans. Bunche stressed that the secretary's impression is that the matter is not very serious. In his opinion, the reason behind the Arabs' activity is Israel's effort to obtain American aid. Comay replied that Israel has to treat the matter seriously and warned that any interference with Israel's water sources would result in a crisis. Bunche promised to report the above to the secretary-general and to keep Comay informed on the matter.

Note

1. Comay received instructions to lodge a protest with Hammarskjöld concerning the activity by the U.A.R. with regard to Israeli water projects; see Tsur to Comay, Y871, 4 December 1959, 130.09/2334/11.

83. M. Erell (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 December 1959

Coded Tel. WNT963; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Erell reports on his talk with Meyer, who gave him the impression that the fuss raised by the Arabs has given the Department of State some cause for thought. But he said the Department has not been deflected from its intention to advance the matter in the favourable direction. Erell replied that the Arabs' threats demand urgent practical action in respect of the Central Conduit because any delay will only cause difficulties.

84. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 December 1959

Coded Tel. RI455; Inc.: 130.09/2313/10

Harman thinks that the Department of State is about to reach a final decision on Israel's requests for aid for its water projects. The proposals should therefore be submitted in an orderly way, preferably through the embassy in Washington. Israel's case should be based on three points:

1. A résumé of all the correspondence between the two countries should stress that Israel's projects conform to the Johnston Plan.

2. Israel should request the immediate approval of the loan for the Central Conduit, while avoiding any publicity in the matter.

3. Israel should stress that its projects would advance its economic development without in any way causing harm to the Arabs. America's denial of aid for Israel's projects because of opposition on the part of the Arabs must be construed as acquiescence in the Arabs' aims to sabotage Israel's economic development. Israel would then have to reconsider its position on the Jordanian Ghor project and on its commitments in the context of the Johnston Plan.[1]

Note

1. Dillon and Harman did not meet until 8 January 1960. The former said that the State Department had no political reservations about the financing of the Central Conduit and American economic institutions could conduct a routine discussion of the Israeli request. (See Vol. 14, No. 115.)

85. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U. N. 11 March 1958[1]

Coded Circular Tel. 557; Outg.: 130.09/2378/1

Eytan briefs the mission on the detention of the *Capetan Manolis* and the unloading of its cargo by the Egyptians in Port Saïd. The ship, flying the Liberian flag, was bound for Ceylon and Malaya with a cargo originating in Israel. It is reported from Ceylon that the government there has intervened in the matter and demanded the release of the cargo. Israel has also requested the intervention of the Liberian government. Tekoah is requested to inform the acting secretary-general of the United Nations and also Bunche about this incident and to request their immediate action.[2] It is in Israel's interest to prevent an open crisis at this stage.

Notes

1. Copies of this telegram were also sent to the Israel missions in Paris, London, Colombo, and Monrovia.
2. Tekoah conducted a number of meetings at the U.N. on this affair. Bunche said that he had read in the newspapers that the Egyptians claimed it was an actually Israeli ship flying a Liberian flag (see Tekoah to the M.F.A., NWT245, 11 March 1959, 130.09/2339/11). Cordier told Tekoah that the permanent representative of the U.A.R. at the U.N., Omar Lutfi, had promised to send a telegram to Cairo. Cordier had the impression that Lutfi felt that the action by the authorities at Port Saïd was not in keeping with normal policy. (See Tekoah to the M.F.A., X66, 13 March 1959, 130.09/2334/6.)

86. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 March 1959

Coded Tel. WNT624; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

Herzog raised the issue of the *Capetan Manolis* with Rountree and pointed out that this action transcended even the illegal regulations of the Arab boycott. He briefed Rountree on Israel's requests for intervention by the United Nations and by Ceylon[2] and also requested American help in resolving this issue without publicity. Rountree promised to cable Cairo in order to find out what could be done, but requested that Israel also approach Liberia about this matter.

Herzog requests the Ministry to inform him by cable whether the Liberians have been approached and what their reaction was.[3]

Notes

1. In this telegram (Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington, 11 March 1959, 130.09/2378/2), the embassy was asked to take action at the State Department in parallel to the efforts by the Israel mission to the U.N.
2. See Tekoah to Eytan, X66, 13 March 1959 (in File 130.09/2334/6). He conveys information received by the permanent mission of Ceylon at the U.N. from its capital, according to which the Ceylonese Foreign Ministry was attempting to resolve the matter through diplomatic channels in Colombo and Cairo so that there was no call for action by the U.N. mission at present.
3. On 19 March, Tekoah informed the M.F.A. (telegram X74, in File 130.09/2334/6) that the Liberian delegation to the U.N. had told him that the matter was being dealt with in Monrovia.

87. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 17 March 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 573; Outg.: 130.09/2378/1

Tekoah reports on the detention of the *Lealott* by the Egyptians in the Suez Canal and the unloading of its cargo. The ship, under the German flag, was bound for Malaya with a cargo of cement originating in Israel. This step proves that the detention and unloading of the *Capetan Manolis* was not a random act but was part of a new policy aimed at preventing Israeli cargoes from passing through the Canal. Tekoah is instructed to approach Cordier and Bunche[1] and to submit a note to the President of the Security Council.[3] The Embassy in Washington is to request immediate intervention in Cairo by the Department of State,[5] and to refer at the same time to the negotiations now being conducted between the Egyptians and the World Bank for a loan for widening the Suez Canal.[4] The mission in Cologne is also instructed to take action, seeing that the ship is registered in Germany, and so are the embassies in London, Paris, and Rome.[6]

Notes

1. In a meeting with Bunche and Cordier on 17 March, Bunche and Cordier expressed their astonishment at the Egyptian step and said they were having difficulties acting in Cairo. (See Tekoah to the M.F.A., NWT262, 17 March 1959, 130.09/2339/11.)

2. See No. 85.
3. See No. 113 (Appendix A).
4. Simultaneously, negotiations were under way between the U.A.R. and the World Bank (of which Black was president) for a loan to renovate the Suez Canal. The loan, in the amount of $56 million, was approved on 21 December 1959; see No. 110, n. 4.
5. Herzog raised the issue in a meeting with Hart of the State Department on 18 March. Hart responded that the State Department shared Israel's concern and did not understand the Egyptian behaviour. A telegram had already been sent to the U.S. ambassador in Cairo, telling him to make contact with the Egyptians; he would receive further instructions to intervene at the very highest level. (See the Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., WNT636, 130.09/2314/8.)
6. Diplomatic action was taken in all these capitals, but there was a significant response only in London, where an Israeli representative was told that instructions had been dispatched to the British permanent representative at the U.N. to raise the Israeli claims with the Egyptians, to emphasize the British interest in freedom of navigation, to note that some of the cargo was the property of a British company, and to protest its confiscation. (See Shek to the M.F.A., telegram 580, 19 March 1959, 130.09/2322/5.)

88. M. Comay and M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 18 March 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 576; Outg.: 130.09/2378/1

Israel cannot clearly understand the Egyptians' motives in choosing this time for such a drastic step. Perhaps it is connected with the discussions now being held at the office of the Arab Boycott on intensifying the boycott. Other possibilities are: (1) The wish to sabotage Israel's developing trade with the Far East. (2) An attempt to fortify Nasser's position in his conflict with Qassim. (3) A demonstrative act against Jewish immigration from Romania. (4) A certain feeling of self-confidence following the financial settlement with Britain. (5) The timing could coincide with the Berlin crisis, which is distracting the world's attention.

Worldwide diplomatic action should be initiated, based first of all on the incontestable facts, but the assumptions stated above may also be cautiously put forward. Action is necessary also at the United Nations, in addition to the Note that has already been submitted to the president of the Security Council.[1] Another meeting should be set up with Cordier and Bunche, and the secretary-general's personal intervention should be sought. It may be stressed that the Government of Israel is considering other lines of action, but the options must not be explained in detail. The highest levels in Washington should be approached and pressure exerted on the Americans

to intervene directly on the issue. The most sensitive aspect for the Americans is most probably the forthcoming negotiations between the U.A.R. and the World Bank in respect of the Suez Canal.[3] It should be intimated to the Americans that Israel will be forced to use all means available to work against this aid to the U.A.R. just when it is intensifying the blockade. Action should also be taken in Germany, Britain, Ceylon, Liberia, Switzerland, the Philippines and Malaya. Talks should also take place in the capitals of the members of the Security Council and of the maritime powers.[5]

Public opinion should not yet be engaged in this conflict—apart from the press conference held by the Israel Mission to the United Nations, where the facts were given out to the media—in the hope that the diplomatic action will solve the problem.

Notes

1. No. 113, Appendix A.
2. Tekoah had another meeting with Cordier, who told him that after their previous session he had sent a letter to the U.A.R. mission at the U.N., expressing astonishment at the challenge to the status quo and the hope that the affair of the cargo would be resolved with alacrity and satisfactorily. Cordier added that the absence of any response to his messages from Cairo placed the U.N. in a difficult situation; he estimated that the delay was caused by the fact that Nasser was just then in Syria. He summed up that if he did not receive the U.A.R. reply "by evening" he would recommend that Hammarskjöld make a personal appeal to Fawzi. Hammarskjöld did in fact send a message to Fawzi. (See Tekoah to the M.F.A., NWT273 and NWT267, 19 and 21 March, 130.09/2339/11.)
3. See No. 87 and n. 4 there.
4. According to a telegram from the Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A. on 24 March (WNT643, 130.09/2314/8), Hart had told Herzog that the U.S. ambassador in Cairo was about to hold meetings at the very highest level and the State Department was awaiting his report. The ambassador would attempt to make his perspective on the issue crystal clear and also to obtain clarifications concerning the fate of the cargo.
5. No documentation of any activity in Germany has been located. Subsequently, a German diplomat told Tekoah that his government had decided not to make an approach to the U.A.R., because the seizure had been directed against the cargo and not the ship or its crew and because the countries to which the cargo had been destined had already taken action. (See Tekoah to Comay, 7 May 1959, 93.03/498/7.)

   The Israeli representatives in Great Britain were told that the permanent mission at the U.N. had been instructed to continue urging the secretary-general to take action, but to forestall any further British contacts on the issue with the U.A.R. mission. (See the Israel embassy in London to the M.F.A., telegram 644, 3 April 1959, 130.09/2322/5.)

   No documentation of diplomatic activity in Colombo has been found.

In Monrovia, Yavor made inquiries and was told that the U.A.R. had not yet replied to the Liberian protest and that the Liberians intended to lodge a new and more forceful complaint. (See Yavor to the M.F.A., 26 March 1959, 130.09/2324/15.)

The Israel ambassador in Bern was told by the Foreign Ministry there that the Swiss ambassador in Cairo had been told to make inquiries about the cargo intended for a Swiss firm (see Linton to the M.F.A., telegram 229, 2 April 1959, 130.09/2302/3.)

The Philippines sent a Note the U.A.R. legation in Manila about the shipment of potash intended for that country (see Golan to the M.F.A., telegram 36, 18 June 1959, 130.09/2328/4).

In the absence of diplomatic relations with Malaya, the Israel embassy in London contacted the Malayan high commissioner (ambassador) in that city; he promised to cable his government about the matter. (See Livran to the M.F.A., telegram 626, 26 March 1959, 130.09/2322/5.)

6. The Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (I.M.C.O.). The issue was raised at a meeting between Liveran and Nielsen, the secretary-general of that organization. The latter said that legal restrictions prevented the I.M.C.O. from raising the issue officially, but promised to pursue the matter unofficially "in certain circles". (See Liveran to the M.F.A., telegram 596, 23 March 1959, 130.09/2322/5.)

89. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 2 May 1959

Coded Tel. TNW202; Outg.: 130.09/2340/1

Biran reports on the prime minister's meeting with Bunche at which the subjects discussed were the Armistice and freedom of passage through the Suez Canal.[1] Bunche said he is impressed by the calm on the Egyptian border and he is optimistic about the possibility of peace along this boundary. He made a number of requests, among them the removal of the roadblock on the Issawiya road,[4] and a retreat to the armistice line on Hill 89.[5] The prime minister promised to check matters and if no violations of the armistice line are involved, he will give the necessary instructions. Bunche also said he is optimistic about the Canal issue. There will be no formal Egyptian commitment, but ships will be able to pass through, adding that the reference is to ships chartered by Israel and carrying Israeli cargo. The prime minister said that freedom of passage is inextricably bound with the Armistice Agreement—no passage, no agreement. Bunche advised Israel not to bracket the two together, claiming that Israel would thereby gain the sympathy of the entire world.

Notes

1. In late April-early May Bunche visited Egypt and Israel for talks on the border situation and passage through the Suez Canal.
2. In November 1956 Ben-Gurion informed the Knesset that the armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt "was dead and buried and would not be resurrected."
3. Farid Zayn al-Din, one of the deputies of the foreign minister of the United Arab Republic.
4. The last house in the village of Issawiya, adjacent to Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus.
5. A hill that was inside the Gaza Strip until the Sinai Campaign. When Israel withdrew from Gaza in 1957 it retained control of the hill.
6. An incident in February 1959, in which an I.D.F. patrol crossed into Sinai by mistake and clashed with a U.N. force there; see No. 173.

90. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 May 1959

Coded Tel. NWT359; Inc.: 130.09/2339/12

Comay reports on his talk with Bunche, who has just returned from his Middle East tour.[1] Bunche said he and Hammarskjöld do not expect the impounding of cargoes in future, and the situation in the Canal will return to what it had been before the two recent incidents. At the same time, the secretary-general is still demanding that the U.A.R. provide a formal and unequivocal statement about two points: (1) the fate of the impounded cargoes; (2) the principles of the future policy of the U.A.R. According to Bunche, Hammarskjöld kept insisting on these points because the only reply he has so far received from the Egyptians is a personal letter from Fawzi,[2] which would be of little use should an official and public report be deemed necessary.

Bunche gave further details of his talk with Fawzi who, he said, stressed that the U.A.R. remains faithful to its declaration of April 1957 and will strictly preserve freedom of navigation.[3] Their guiding principle will be the necessity of guarding the safety of the Canal which might be endangered by ships flying the Israeli flag. Fawzi reiterated that there is no blockade and there is no intention of imposing one.

Bunche finally referred to the sailing of the *Inge Toft* which is reported to be a "test ship". He said such rumours are unhelpful in the present situation. Tekoah replied that there is no intention on Israel's part to give publicity to so-called test ships.

Notes

1. From a Middle East tour; see No. 89 and n. 1 there.
2. On 2 May, Cordier informed Tekoah that Hammarskjöld had received a letter from Fawzi in which the latter proclaimed the "continuation of their past policy". Cordier added that he intended to request clarifications on the subject during his scheduled meeting with Fawzi in Geneva. (See Tekoah to the M.F.A., NWT350, 2 May 1959, 130.09/2339/12.) See also No. 94.
3. The reference is to an exchange of letters between Fawzi and Hammarskjöld to mark the reopening of the Suez Canal after the Sinai Campaign. In his letter to Hammarskjöld, dated 24 April 1957, Fawzi wrote: "The Government of Egypt is more particularly determined: 1. To afford and maintain free and uninterrupted navigation for all nations within rights of and in accordance with provisions of the Constantinople convention of 1888." In his reply of the next day, Hammarskjöld wrote: "I understand that the Government of Egypt considers that the declaration constitutes an engagement of international character." (The exchange of letters was published as U.N. documents S/3818 and S/3819.)

91. Economic Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 25 May 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 674; Outg.: 130.09/2378/1

The Danish ship *Inge Toft* has sailed with a cargo for the Far East. The Egyptian press has reported that it has been detained and its cargo impounded. Cairo radio, in its Hebrew broadcast, called the ship's dispatch a provocation, as the cargo could also have been sent through Eilat. The broadcast also announced that "there is no power in the world that can open the Suez Canal to Israel as long as we are at war with it".

The Egyptian position, as stated in the application for the cargo's confiscation, is that, although the ship is flying a neutral flag, it has been chartered by an Israeli company and is in effect under full control of an enemy shipping line, thus changing its status to that of an enemy vessel. The cargo is under Israeli ownership and is, in any case, a product of occupied Palestine.

Bunche expressed his hope that the Arabs "will not act foolishly" and added that if the cargo is not permitted to pass through the Canal, then the convening of the Security Council cannot be avoided.

The government discussed the issue yesterday and will decide on its steps next week.[1]

Note

1. The affair was discussed at two government meetings, on 31 May and 6 June. A report on the diplomatic contacts was submitted. Ben-Gurion noted that because of the anticipated Soviet veto there was no point in lodging a complaint with the Security Council. The United States and Great Britain were opposed to convening an emergency session of the General Assembly, and if one were convened, other matters were liable to be placed on the agenda, including the question of the refugees, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and the frontiers. No decision was taken at these meetings.

92. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 25 May 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 675; Outg.: 130.09/2378/1

Eytan transmits to the missions the text of the instructions given to Herzog by the prime minister to immediately approach the highest level in the Department of State and to express the extreme seriousness that the Government of Israel attaches to the *Inge Toft* affair. This act is an insult to the United Nations and the Security Council, and a clear violation of international agreements. These actions by Egypt may endanger peace in the Middle East, as hostile acts cannot long remain one-sided. In view of the paralysis now affecting the Security Council because of the Soviet veto, Israel wishes to convene an emergency meeting of the General Assembly in order to deal with the problem in depth. The convocation requires the signatures of seven members of the Security Council or of a majority of the members of the United Nations. That is the reason for Israel's appeal to the United States to support this demand.[1]

Note

1. See No. 93.

93. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 May 1959

Coded Tel. WNT685; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

As instructed by Eytan,[1] Herzog met with Murphy to discuss the Suez Canal crisis. He stressed that acts of hostility cannot long remain one-sided. He asked for America's help in having the General Assembly of the United Nations convene for an emergency session. Murphy said that instructions have already been given to Hare in Cairo to send an appraisal of the situation and to consider the advisability of approaching Nasser again. Murphy will again instruct Hare to act urgently and he expects his reply shortly. They have reason to believe that the cargo will not be impounded and will do all they can to resolve the problem through contacts with the Egyptians. Should it however turn out that the Egyptians are confiscating the cargo, they will weigh Israel's request to convene an emergency session. He assumes that Israel's main object is to have the cargo go through. He asked whether Israel is also approaching other governments.

Herzog replied that he also assumes that if the cargo is allowed to pass through the Canal, then Israel will not demand the convocation of the assembly. As to approaches to other governments, he said he has no knowledge of such.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 92.
2. On 28 May 1959 the State Department informed the Israel Embassy that Hare had reported that in accordance with Murphy's instructions he would soon be having a meeting "at the highest level." (See telegram WNT691, 28 May 1959, 130.09/2314/8.)

94. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 May 1959

Coded Tel. NWT402; Inc.: 130.09/2339/12

Tekoah met with Hammarskjöld and Bunche. Hammarskjöld read out to Tekoah the operative part of the letter he had received from Fawzi the day before[1] [for the full text, see Main Volume, p. 161]. Hammarskjöld said he will see to it that the principles expressed in the letter will be adhered to in

practice. He stressed that the letter was a private communication and will not be published.[2]

Hammarskjöld then raised the issue of the *Abdul Karim*[3] and asked whether there is any connection between this case and the *Inge Toft* affair. He thinks it advisable for Israel to release the Egyptian vessel.

Tekoah referred to Israel's wish to convene an emergency session.[5] Hammarskjöld replied that Israel has to weigh very carefully whether such a step would be profitable. From the procedural point of view, the Security Council has first to decide whether there is a threat to peace in the present situation. Tekoah replied that two such assemblies have already taken place in the past without such a decision being first taken by the Security Council. Hammarskjöld admitted this, but said that hostilities were then taking place. He added that even if seven members of the Council support Israel's request, this will not assure a majority in the assembly. If Israel attempts to convene the assembly without going through the Security Council, there is no guarantee that the necessary majority of the members will agree to such an assembly. Even if the assembly convenes, there is still no assurance that Israel will secure the necessary two-thirds majority, and that would have undesirable consequences.

The secretary-general said he is considering approaching Nasser himself. He is leaving the end of June free for a visit to Cairo. He cannot promise that this will take place, and he would not wish to create the erroneous impression that he is attempting to dissuade Israel from acting on this issue by promising to go to Cairo. In any case, it is clear that no direct negotiations with Nasser would be possible should the issue be brought up publicly at the United Nations. He ended by saying that he does not think any overt action on Israel's part would put an end to the obstructions to passage through the Canal, and that any report of Israel's intention to apply to the Security Council would bring about the immediate confiscation of the cargo.[6]

Notes

1. See also No. 90 and n. 2 there.
2. See Tekoah to the M.F.A. (telegram NWT403, 130.09/2339/12). There he reports that Bunche had confirmed that Hammarskjöld had sent a letter to Fawzi, defined by the latter as "extremely grave", in which the secretary-general forcefully demanded the release of the *Inge Toft* and its cargo.
3. A Syrian ship bearing a cargo of garlic and onions, intercepted by the Israeli navy off the coast of Sidon in May 1959. The crew was released in August of that year.
4. This agreement was signed on 23 July 1953 by the Israeli and Egyptian representatives on the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission. It stipulated that

should a non-military vessel of either country, carrying non-military cargo, be forced by engine trouble, storm, or any other reason beyond the control of the vessel and its crew, to seek refuge in the territorial waters of the other country, it would be granted shelter and be allowed thereafter to proceed on its way at the earliest possible time, with its cargo, crew, and passengers. (See Vol. 8, No. 310.)

5. See No. 92.
6. After one hundred days had elapsed and the *Inge Toft* had still not been allowed to proceed through the Suez Canal, on 31 August Israel sent a Note on the matter to the president of the Security Council; this was circulated as U.N. document S/4211; see No. 114, Appendix B.

95. Meeting: Y. Tekoah–R. Bunche and A. Cordier (New York). 4 July 1959

Notes

1. A. Eilan was also present at the meeting and took notes of the conversation.
2. See No. 94 and n. 3 there.
3. That is, the situation that had prevailed from the reopening of the Suez Canal in 1957 until the detention of the *Capetan Manolis* and *Lealott* in 1959.

96. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 July 1959

Coded Tel. WNT787; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

At a meeting at the Department of State, the Americans explained the arrangement reached by Hammarskjöld with the Egyptians: (1) Vessels flying the Israeli flag will not be permitted passage through the Canal. (2) Vessels chartered by Israel but carrying cargo under non-Israeli ownership will be permitted to pass through. (3) The Egyptian definition of non-Israeli ownership is as follows: Israeli exports under f.o.b. conditions will be considered as belonging to the buyer and will be permitted passage; imports to Israel under c.i.f. conditions will be considered as belonging to the seller, and will be permitted passage. All the above is conditional on the trade being "honest", i.e. the Egyptians will not allow passage of vessels dispatched for political reasons. The Egyptians also explained that if the sailing of the ships were accompanied by publicity, even if it were only

periodical statistics on the amount of merchandise passing through the Canal in a certain period of time, the agreement would not be honoured.[2]

Rountree said that the Department of State considers this agreement a reasonable basis for the settlement of the issue and is supporting it. The Department of State is now awaiting Israel's response.

Notes

1. See Herzog to the prime minister et al., WNT788, 5 June 1959, 130.09/2314/9. Herzog wrote, inter alia, that publicity was the key and decisive issue with regard to the proposed settlement. "In other words, if Nasser is not prevaricating, the settlement will stand or fall on the publicity."
2. The prime minister replied: "Since we do not have the power to prevent publicity, and reports may be published about any vessel and cargo, it seems to me that the 'Nasser-Hammarskjöld agreement' is devoid of content. Nasser will always have an excuse for stopping a ship and removing its cargo, on the alleged grounds of prior publicity, without formally breaching his promises to Hammarskjöld." (See Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington, TNW408, 6 July 1959, 130.09/2313/1.) See also No. 97.

97. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 July 1959

Coded Tel. NWT793; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Herzog reports on his telephone conversation with the foreign minister.[1] Mrs. Meir said that the final decision with regard to the Egyptian proposal should be taken by the government, but in her opinion this proposal is unacceptable for two reasons: 1) purchasers in Asia would rather buy elsewhere than complicate matters by an f.o.b. arrangement; 2) Israel itself could guarantee the secrecy of any transaction but could not assume responsibility for avoiding publicity by other parties. In her opinion the secretary-general has attempted to extricate Nasser from his predicament by offering a proposal that Israel could not accept.

Note

1. Foreign Minister Meir was then in Lima, as part of her Latin American tour.

98. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to J. Herzog (Washington). 13 July 1959

Copy: 130.23/3112/9II

Eytan reports on the government meeting at which he submitted an exhaustive report on the Suez Canal situation. The debate, which was likewise exhaustive, can be summed up as follows:

1) Nasser's proposals as transmitted by the secretary-general are unacceptable.[1]
2) The government will decide, presumably at its next meeting, to demand that the Security Council be convened, after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sounded out the main powers on this point.
3) Israel will oppose the unloading of the *Inge Toft*'s cargo in Port Saïd, but will not oppose the ship's return to Haifa with its cargo.

The members of the government are all agreed on having Israel's trade with the Far East directed through Eilat. It is clear to all that the campaign over the Suez Canal is no less vital for protecting Israeli passage through the Gulf of Eilat. Nasser will certainly turn his efforts to disrupting shipping through that channel the minute he is freed of the Suez problem, and that is why Israel has to keep attacking him on that issue, including the appeal to the Security Council. None of those present think it advisable to dispatch a test cargo, f.o.b., through the Canal. If such a ship were let through, all the powers would regard the problem as solved, and the World Bank loan to Egypt[4] would be approved.

Eytan's conclusion is that a majority of the government will recommend an appeal to the Security Council. The prime minister, whose opinion will in the end be decisive, has not yet expressed his views on this matter.

Notes

1. See Nos. 95 and 96.
2. No such decision was taken, after it was learned that the United States, Great Britain, and France did not support a meeting of the Security Council. (See Herzog to the M.F.A., WNT813, 10 July 1959, 130.09/2314/9; Liveran to the M.F.A., telegram 87, 16 July 1959, 130.23/3112/9; Shneerson to the M.F.A., telegram 112, 17 July 1959, ibid.)
3. In this letter (in File 130.23/3112/9), Herzog wrote that continuation of the campaign for free navigation through the Suez Canal would depend on "rapid organization of the quiet test, that is, of a ship with f.o.b. exports."
4. For the renovation of the Suez Canal; see No. 87 and n. 4 there.

5. In this letter (dated 12 July, ibid.), Eytan replied to Herzog's question as to when Israel would send a vessel to make a "quiet test", carrying an f.o.b. cargo from Haifa, as per Nasser's conditions. Eytan noted that it was a difficult and complex matter to organize a shipment of f.o.b. goods from Haifa; if possible at all, it would take some time. In the present circumstances it would be quite artificial to arrange such a shipment from Haifa merely to test Nasser's sincerity.

99. G. Meir (Washington) to the U.S. Secretary of State. 16 September 1959

Notes

1. Eisenhower said, inter alia, that "if, unhappily, Egypt does hereafter violate the Armistice Agreement or other international obligation this should be dealt with firmly by the society of nations."
2. Meir's move was backed by vigorous public and diplomatic efforts by the embassy to have an appropriate passage included in Secretary Herter's speech. Armin Meyer of the State Department was opposed to this, arguing that an explicit condemnation of Egypt would set to naught the American attempts at mediation. Only the office of United Nations political affairs , and, with reservations, the Office of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department were favourably inclined toward the Israeli request. In the event, Herter's remarks were couched in generalities and Israel was not mentioned. He said: "Another problem in this area has arisen with regard to passage through the Suez Canal. The United States continues to support the principle of freedom of navigation, as endorsed by the United Nations. We are confident that, if those immediately concerned seek to reconcile their differences in a spirit of mutual accommodation, progress can be made toward a solution". (See M. Erell to the United States Division, 17 September 1959, 130.23/3112/10; *GAOR, 14th Session, Plenary Meetings*, 797th Meeting, 17 September 1959, p. 16.)

100. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 October 1959

Coded Tel. NWT754; Inc.: 130.23/3112/11

Tekoah reports to Eytan on Mrs. Meir's talk with Hammarskjöld. The minister of foreign affairs asked for Hammarskjöld's assessment of what was said at the Assembly on freedom of navigation and what his future intentions are. The secretary-general replied that the speeches at the

Assembly reflected the prevailing opinion on freedom of navigation and that they will be helpful to him in his future actions. However, these opinions should have been expressed more forcibly, and it is unfortunate that all the Arab representatives supported the policy of the U.A.R. on the Canal issue. Mrs. Meir pointed out that 20 out of the 33 members who could have been expected to support Israel's position did indeed do so, while the fact that the Communist and the non-Arab Muslim speakers made no reference to the issue is also of significance.

Hammarskjöld then abandoned his previous reservations about the speeches and said they will indeed be helpful in his efforts. He has already pointed out to Zayn al-Din that the U.A.R.'s stand is unwise and that they will eventually "pay for it". He intended to speak with Fawzi, who is expected by the end of the week. His fundamental position on freedom of navigation has not changed and remains based on full freedom of passage, but from the pragmatic point of view he considers his first task to be the restoration of the status quo ante. He made no mention at all of the proposals about the f.o.b. and c.i.f. He will contact Israel after his talk with Fawzi.

Notes

1. Bo Östen Undén, the Swedish foreign minister, devoted several paragraphs of his speech at the General Assembly to the Suez Canal. He said, inter alia, that he did not believe that it was a problem of legal niceties linked to the interpretation of the term "state of war", but an unreasonable situation in which two member states of the United Nations had maintained hostile relations for a number of years. If that meant war, it was incumbent on them to make peace, because the blockade was of no practical value to the U.A.R. and caused damage to many countries, including Sweden. See *GAOR, 14th Session, Plenary Meetings*, 30 September 1959, p. 269.
2. The Peruvian foreign minister, Raul Porras Barenechea, cited provisions of international law with regard to freedom of commerce; see ibid., 29 September 1959, p. 221.
3. See No. 101.
4. On Hammarskjöld's report, see No. 139. At the 32nd session of the Council of the Arab League, held in Casablanca in 1-8 September 1959, it was decided to accept Hammarskjöld's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNRWA, on condition that its activity be limited to providing assistance to refugees and have no political character.

101. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to G. Meir (Jerusalem). 7 October 1959

Notes

1. See No. 100.
2. The reference is to the remarks by Arthur Lourie, who said, during the plenary debate on 5 October, that more than 20 countries had expressed their support for free navigation, whereas the position of the U.A.R. had not won the backing of any non-Arab state. (See *GAOR, 14th Session, Plenary Meetings*, 820th Meeting, 5 October 1959, p. 354.)
3. Addressing the General Assembly on 6 October, the Indian representative, Defence Minister V. K. Krishna Menon, said that if something in the prevailing situation in the Canal infringed the legal rights or interests of the parties or international custom, the matter was justiciable and should be brought before the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ibid., 823th Meeting, pp. 425-246).
4. See No. 100.
5. In an exchange of telegrams between Tekoah and Meir, the latter inquired about the basis of the secretary-general's statement that the *Inge Toft* would be allowed to sail in any direction after unloading its cargo. Tekoah replied that in his conversations with Hammarskjöld and his aides he had not been explicitly informed that the U.A.R. would allow the vessel to proceed without its cargo, but this was considered to be self-understood in light of the experiences with the *Capetan Manolis* and *Lealott* (See the exchange of telegrams, 25 October 1959, 130.23/3112/11.)

102. Bureau of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U.N. 29 October 1959

Coded Tel. TNW632; Outg.: 130.23/3112/11

G. Meir's reply to the secretary-general's letter—No. 101—is transmitted. The full text is in the Main Volume, pp. 178-179.

The secretary-general is informed that Israel is faced with the necessity to send more cargoes through the Canal in the very near future. No publicity will be given to these sailings, as far as Israel is concerned.

In its contacts with Hammarskjöld, the mission must reject the proposal to return to the "practical stand" and must insist on the restoration of the arrangement in force up to the latest obstructions —that is, the free passage of ships and cargo through the Canal in both directions. The Bureau points out that the minister of foreign affairs did not refer in her reply to the *Inge*

Toft case because she does not wish to link this affair with the general issue of freedom of navigation.

Notes

1. No. 101.
2. See No. 103.
3. A copy of the original letter is in File 11/498/93.03.

103. A. Lourie (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 October 1959

Coded Tel. NWT817; Inc.: 130.09/2339/14

Lourie reports to the minister of foreign affairs on his talk with Hammarskjöld, at which Comay and Tekoah were also present. Hammarskjöld was handed Mrs. Meir's letter,[1] through which he skimmed and then said that this is all past history, and that now one has to think of the future. The Israelis said that Israel is planning to send additional cargoes through the Canal and wish to be informed about the latest developments. The secretary-general said there is nothing new but that he is more optimistic because the atmosphere is clearer. The formula of reverting to 1958 has been accepted, and Israel has shown much restraint lately. He will meet with Fawzi and give his reply to Israel before the end of the week.[2] He said he is glad that Israel is not exerting pressure in the matter of the *Inge Toft*. Throughout the conversation Hammarskjöld voiced no objection to the renewal of the attempts to send cargoes through the Canal.

Notes

1. See No. 102.
2. See No. 104.

104. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to A. Lourie (Jerusalem). 9 November 1959

Note

1. See No. 103.

105. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to D. Hammarskjöld (New York). 16 November 1959

Notes

1. No. 104.
2. No. 101.
3. The original mistakenly has "1 November."

106. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 November 1959

Coded Tel. RI383; Inc.: 130.09/2313/10

Harman discussed with Herter several issues regarding the relations between Israel and the United States. He pointed out that Israel has shown great restraint and moderation in the Suez Canal issue, and has even refrained from sending an Israeli registered ship through the Canal. This said, Israel is not prepared to have its trade obstructed and is planning to send another ship through the Canal in the near future. The United States is requested to use its influence to restore the conditions as they were at the beginning of that year.

Herter replied that the Department of State is in constant touch with the secretary-general on that matter. It understood that Hammarskjöld has formulated an interim procedure to be effective until a final solution is reached. The Department of State thinks this proposal has a chance of being accepted. It will keep in touch with the secretary-general and is also weighing the possibility of direct action.

Notes

1. In October 1959, the United States intervened at Israel's request on behalf of eight Syrian Jews who has been accused of espionage and attempting to cross the border to Israel to enlist in the I.D.F. As a result of this intervention, death sentences were not handed down. Instead, five of the defendants were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and the other three were acquitted. See No. 242.
2. Eban was elected to the Knesset in the November elections and appointed minister without portfolio in the new government, which took office on 16 December 1959.
3. Here and below, two paragraphs dealing with arms supplies to Israel and the water projects have been excised; they are printed as No. 243.
4. See No. 99 and n. 2 there.

107. D. Hammarskjöld [New York] to G. Meir (Jerusalem). 23 November 1959

Notes

1. No. 105.
2. No. 104.

108. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 11 December 1959

Coded Tel. TNW750; Outg.: 130.09/2340/3

The mission and the ambassador are informed that the *Astypalea*, on voyage charter from Haifa to Djibouti with a cargo of cement, is due to sail soon. Absolute secrecy must be observed and measures have been taken to prevent publicity. The ship will reach the Canal on the 15th or 16th of that month. All the arrangements are in accordance with the "practical stand". The addressees can decide whether to approach the secretary-general or the Department of State, or to follow Herzog in his No. 933, para (b).[2] The object is to launch a political and information campaign on the eve of the World Bank's approval of the loan to Egypt, which is expected on the 21st, in a last attempt to foil that transaction.[3]

Notes

1. In this telegram, dated 9 December 1959 (in File 130.09/2339/25), Harman and Comay reported on their efforts to prevent approval of the World Bank loan to the U.A.R. and estimated that as long as Hammarskjöld's suggestion of sending a ship to the Canal had not been implemented Israel would be unable to influence a postponement of the loan. They proposed telling Hammarskjöld that Israel was about to dispatch a ship and was asking him to contact Nasser and inform Israel as to the situation, because "our intention is not to create an incident but to renew commerce".
2. Herzog suggested that, when a ship was ready, the State Department and U.N. secretary-general be notified of its sailing date. It should be emphasized to them that the cargoes on this vessel and the one after it would be f.o.b., as requested by Hammarskjöld; but the freight on all subsequent ships would be c.i.f., since this was the only way to do business. "In this way, we can deprive the secretary-general and the State Department of any pretext that by sending a c.i.f. shipment we straightaway destroyed what they had accomplished, and at the same time we will make it plain that we are making no substantive concession from the terms of 1958. (See Herzog to the M.F.A., TNW797, 21 December 1959, 130.09/2340/3.)
3. The loan was in fact approved on 21 December 1959, despite Israel's efforts to forestall it.

109. M. Comay (New York) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 11 December 1959

Coded Tel. NWT940; Inc.: 130.09/2339/20

Comay has informed the secretary-general of the expected sailing of the *Astypalea*,[1] stressing that Israel is acting on his recommendations and that the responsibility lies with him. This step does imply that Israel has come to terms with the "practical stand"; it insistes on having the situation as it was in 1958 restored as soon as possible. He also referred to the detention of the German ship, which is inconsistent even with the "practical stand".[2]

Hammarskjöld has expressed his satisfaction about this information and has no reservations about what he had been told. He sees no reason for being concerned about a possible hitch, and hopes to steer the issue in the desired direction. He has not been able to extract from the Egyptians an explicit commitment, but Fawzi understands his attitude and has not reacted.

Notes

1. See No. 108.

2. The German vessel *Novistor*, leased by Zim, en route to Djibouti by way of Eilat, which was detained at Port Saïd on 28 October and held for three days.
3. Woods of the World Bank told Arad that Nasser had told him that as long as Qassim kept denouncing him for ostensibly having sold out to the West for a $50-million loan from the World Bank, he could not retreat from his position on the passage of Israel merchandise through the Canal. (See Arad to the M.F.A., NWT929, 9 December 1959, 130.09/2339/20.)
4. At a meeting between Blaustein and Hammarskjöld on 4 December 1959, the latter said that even though he did not yet have direct confirmation from Nasser, he was in possession of reliable reports that the formula of a return to the 1958 situation had been approved by Nasser himself. As for implementation, he said that a short transitional period would be required. Israel should begin with the practical stand and then proceed to the 1958 formula. (See Lourie to the M.F.A., NWT916, 4 December 1959, 130.09/2339/20.)
5. After the *Astypalea* was detained at Port Saïd, Comay attempted to contact Hammarskjöld but was unable to reach him. Instead, he conveyed the information to him via Bunche. Hammarskjöld spoke on the telephone with Fawzi, but did not obtain any clear response about the release of the vessel. Immediately after their conversation Hammarskjöld dictated a forceful message to Fawzi. (See Comay to the M.F.A., NWT957, 18 December 1959, 130.09/2339/20.)
6. Morocco had broken off postal connections with Israel and attempts were being made to transfer mail via a third country.

110. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Diplomatic Representation in Athens. 20 December 1959

Coded Tel. 69; Outg.: 130.09/2293/3

Bartur briefs Athens on the instructions given by the minister of foreign affairs[1] to the mission in New York and the embassy in Washington to urge the secretary-general to act on the detention of the *Astypalea*. They should find out what happened to the ship and do all they can to suspend the World Bank's loan to Egypt, approaching also circles in the United States.[3] The mission in Athens should exert all possible efforts to have the ship's captain oppose the unloading of the cargo, as did the captain of the *Inge Toft*.[4]

Notes

1. The telegram, TNW776, dated 18 December 1959, is in File 130.09/2313/1.
2. On 20 December, Bunche informed Comay, in Hammarskjöld's name, that he had still not received a clear response from Cairo and had set another strong message to

Nasser (see Comay to the M.F.A., NWT974, 20 December 1959, 130.09/2339/20). On 21 December, Hammarskjöld stated that he had no intention of interfering in the deliberations of the World Bank concerning the loan to the U.A.R. (See Bartur to the Israel Mission in New York, telegram TNW797, 21 December 1959, 130.09/2340/3.)

3. The loan to Egypt was approved despite Israel's efforts.
4. The Israeli diplomatic representative Prato replied that he knew, from a reliable source, that the Greek Foreign Ministry had no intention of taking action, on the grounds that the U.A.R. had announced its decision not to permit the passage of Israeli cargoes; hence anyone who acted contrary to this decision did so at his own risk. (See Prato to Bartur, telegram 407, 22 December 1959, 130.09/2293/7.)

111. Editorial Note

Foreign minister's speech in the Knesset on 22 December 1959 on the issue of freedom of navigation and the detention of the Astypalea.

Israel imposed a news blackout on the incident of the *SS Astypalea*, to keep the United Arab Republic from repeating the assertions it had made in the case of the *Inge Toft*, namely, that it had been stopped because of the prior publicity. Israel also avoided any official and public reaction after international news agencies distributed reports from Cairo about the detention of the *Astypalea*, in order to permit Hammarskjöld and the United States to act in the matter without giving the U.A.R. room to claim that the issue had turned into a test of strength between itself and Israel.

Only after several days had passed with no positive results did Foreign Minister Golda Meir address the affair, in a speech to the Knesset on 22 December 1959. She reviewed developments since the detention of the *Capetan Manolis* and *Lealott* and repeated the details of the settlement reached by Hammarskjöld in Cairo. She noted that Israel had not been able to persuade friendly parties who proposed that it try out the arrangement that it was misleading and merely a stratagem meant to create an impression of moderation and willingness by the U.A.R. to reach a compromise and arrangements regarding navigation. For this reason Israel had come to the conclusion that it must try to send a vessel in the conditions and method recommended by friendly parties.

"In our struggle for freedom of navigation we decided to follow even this devious path", she said.

Meir criticized the decision by the World Bank to approve a loan of $56 million to the U.A.R. to renovate the Suez Canal. She described the step as "a political action in and of itself, which Nasser will certainly view as encouragement for similar actions in the future."

She concluded her remarks by saying that Israel would not suspend its efforts to broaden its commercial ties with countries both near and far and would not stop insisting on its right for free and nondiscriminatory use of the Suez Canal.

(See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, First Session of the Fourth Knesset, Vol. XXVIII, 22 December 1959, pp. 176–78.)

112. M. Comay (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 December 1959

Coded Tel. NWT995; Inc.: 130.09/2339/20

Comay and Tekoah met with Bunche and Cordier. There has still been no sign of a reply from Cairo, but the talk was based on what the American representative had been told there.[1] Comay said that the Egyptians' action has been a double blow to the secretary-general's plan of "coasting" gradually back to the conditions of 1958. It is not only a retreat from the "practical stand", but it also demonstrates that the Egyptians are not thinking at all in terms of a "gradual coasting", in spite of what the secretary-general has said in the past.

Comay said that, though he has not yet received instructions from Jerusalem, he wished to make two preliminary observations. Firstly, Israel's acceptance of the "practical stand" has been accompanied by serious doubts, and it in no way serves as a basis for continued trade. Israel cannot accept the Egyptians' new conditions even as a starting point towards something better. Secondly, experience has shown that the secretary-general's attempt to return to the 1958 conditions in two stages has only complicated the problem, and the minimal starting point acceptable must be "straight to 1958".

The U.N. officials said that they consider the Egyptian stand a retreat and that it is not the accepted interpretation of the term "f.o.b.". If the Egyptians persist in this attitude, the secretary-general will consider this a change in the situation, and will not ask Israel to accept these conditions as a starting point. The *Astypalea* was dispatched in good faith in accordance with the "practical stand", and a change in this arrangement could not apply retroactively. The secretary-general will continue insisting that the ship be allowed through with its cargo. They agreed that the attempt to restore the 1958 conditions in two stages has failed, and it may be advisable to reach that position in one step. They added that the Egyptians' behaviour

made their intentions suspect, not only in the present case but also in other matters on which unwritten agreements have been reached. Nasser has so far been keeping his word, but here he has let the secretary-general down.

Note

1. The reference is evidently to information passed on to the Israel Embassy in Washington about talks held by a U.S. diplomat in Cairo on the issue of freedom of navigation. The Americans refused to convey the Egyptian position but noted, on the basis of "various hints," that the Egyptians were liable to allege that the dispatch of the ship has not been in accordance with the terms of the practical stand position "as they understood it," in other words, not only f.o.b. but also transfer of title to the cargo. (See Ya'ari to the M.F.A., NWT994, 28 December 1959, 130.09/2314/9.)

113. Appendix A

Letter Dated 17 March 1959 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council (U.N. Document S/4173)

114. Appendix B

Letter dated 31 August 1959 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council (U.N. Document S/4211)

115. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 26 March 1958

Coded Tel. 977; Inc.: 130.09/2348/4

A few days ago it became apparent that the Renault company has been in contact with the Arabs and is seeking a way in which to sever its contract with an Israeli company in exchange for its name being deleted from the boycott list. Renault claims that business with Israel does not pay, since it is losing a market of thousands of cars in the Arab countries as against a few hundred sold in Israel. A letter was received today from the Kaiser Frazer

Company by the director-general of the Ministry of Transport,[3] informing of the annulment of the agreement as of 1 October, the reason being that the transaction is not worthwhile; especially detrimental, it is claimed, is the clause that allows Israel to import from France twenty percent of the vehicles as assembled cars, which precludes the possibility of their being assembled locally.

Bartur points out that the true reason is undoubtedly the Arab boycott. Renault receives preferential treatment and the cancellation will lead to economic and political problems. Intervention at the highest level is urgent. The foreign minister should be notified that her presence in Paris might make emergency action possible.[4] Gilbert has been informed. He is shocked and has already sent a cable.[5]

Notes

1. Joel Tennen, a local employee at the French embassy in Israel, who handled economic affairs.
2. Pierre Dreyfus, president of Renault.
3. Pinhas Ginsburg, director-general of the Ministry of Transport.
4. Golda Meir, who was in Paris at the time, en route to Israel after her tour of West Africa. On 29 March she raised the matter with the French Foreign Minister, Pineau. He said that Renault executives had told him that vehicles assembled in Israel cost 20% more than those assembled in France and were accordingly not competitive. He added that we should "reject any suspicion that the decision had any political intent". (See Tsur to the M.F.A., telegram 253, 30 March 1958, 130.09/2348/3.)
5. In a conversation with Meir on 15 April, Gilbert said that he had received official notification from the Quai d'Orsay that Renault would renew the vehicle-assembly accord; the only problem was the business negotiations to modify the terms of the agreement with Kaiser-Frazer. (See the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Paris, telegram 87, 16 April 1958, 130.09/2348/4.) See also Nos. 125 and 126.

116. M. Varon (New York) to M. Bartur (Jerusalem). 13 May 1958

Copy: 130.18/2053/14

Varon has passed on the State Department's reply to the Conference of Presidents[1] report. He has already sent Dr. Israel Goldstein's response to this reply. For the full version of the State Department's reply, see Main Volume, pp. 197-199.

Notes

1. The report focused on discrimination against Jews by Arab states, but also dealt with the boycott against Israel and the pressure exerted on various companies to avoid investments and normal commercial relations with Israel. The report has not been found.
2. The reply, dated 18 April 1958, criticizes the helplessness shown by the U.S. Administration in the fight against the Arab boycott (in File 130.18/2053/14.)

117. E. Najar (Tokyo) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 9 October 1958

Copy: 130.18/2053/14

The Arabs are doing everything in their power to sabotage relations between Japan and Israel. Recently deliberations by the Arab League on this matter have been reported. Steps must be taken to prevent this and we must not rely on American official intervention. On the other hand, it is well known that much of the trade between the U.S. and Japan is mainly conducted by American Jews. This potential should be organized and put to use–for example every Jewish business person visiting Japan should stress the importance of ties between Japan and Israel, pointing out that submission to the boycott could adversely effect the goodwill of the United States towards Japan. He proposes that Eban convene the various Israeli representatives in the U.S. for a briefing on this matter, stressing of course the need to maintain an attitude of friendship towards Japan. He suggests forwarding a copy of his letter to Eban for his comments.[1]

Note

1. This document was forwarded to Eban by Eytan, with a covering letter dated 15 October 1958 (130.18/2053/14). It read, in part: "The Arabs' assaults and schemes in Tokyo are truly grave. Do you see any possibility of action as proposed by Najar? I think the idea is excellent and it is merely a question of organization." Eban's reply has not been found.

118. Sh. Levin (Tokyo) to the Economic Division. 10 October 1958

Copy: 130.18/2053/14

Levin refers to reports about Arab pressure on the Japanese, including reports on deliberations by the Arab League. He has not raised the issue in his meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry, but it was broached in a discussion with Oshiba, head of the economic bureau. Oshiba spoke of the pressure being applied by the Arab states by means of their ambassadors to Japan and through Japanese ambassadors in the Arab states and also by boycott, or threat of boycott, of Japanese companies trading with Israel. Oshiba himself does not underestimate the commercial potential involved in relations between Israel and Japan, and the conversation related to various transactions and investments. He reiterated his willingness to be of assistance in increasing Israeli exports to Japan but requested that this be given as little publicity as possible. The possible visit of an Israeli economic delegation dealing with development projects was discussed.[1] On a previous occasion he endeavoured to postpone the visit, but after he heard that the delegation was on its way he issued an official announcement to the effect that the Japanese government would welcome it.

Notes

1. During the second half of 1958 a delegation comprising the heads of various enterprises affiliated with the Ministry of Development (the phosphates plant, the Dead Sea Works, and others) was supposed to visit several countries in the Far East. The tour was postponed, however, and did not take place until April-May 1959. The mission was headed by the Minister of Development, Mordechai Bentov.
2. The document has not been located.
3. See No. 117.

119. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Director of the West European Division. 9 December 1958

Copy: 130.18/2053/14

Sasson has learned that Italian firms in the vicinity of Florence exporting goods to Arab countries attach to these goods certificates signed by the firm

and verified by the Industrial Association and National Association of Chambers of Commerce confirming that their goods do not contain Israeli raw materials or components manufactured by Israeli workers, and that these certificates have been ratified by the Italian Ministry of Commerce and Industry and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He took steps to obtain copies of these documents. After he succeeded in acquiring these certificates (those issued by the commercial companies, from the manufacturers union, and from the chambers of commerce)[2] he wrote to the Italian director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[3] requesting an explanation. He presumes that he will soon be called for a discussion and in the meantime requests instructions from Israel.[4]

Notes

1. Astorre Mayer, honorary Israel consul-general in Milan.
2. These documents have not been found, but their content is reviewed in a Note sent by Ambassador Sasson to the Italian Foreign Ministry. The text of the Note is attached, but has been omitted here.
3. Carlo de Ferraris Salzano, the secretary-general (director-general) of the Italian Foreign Ministry.
4. Bartur jotted a note in the margin: "A. Chelouche, N. Eshkol, what is your opinion of this fantastic idea? What action could we seize upon? We'll consult on the matter. M.B. 15 XII." N. Eshkol added, "let's wait for the reaction of the Italian Foreign Ministry."

120. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Director of the West European Division. 23 December 1958

Copy: 130.18/2053/14

In consequence of his letter to the director-general of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was invited to a meeting with the director of the economic department of the ministry. He was handed a written response, according to which neither the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor any other ministry are aware of the existence of such certificates and, should they indeed exist, they are not issued with the authorisation of these ministries. The response is attached.[2] During the course of the cordial and polite conversation that followed, he was informed that an examination has revealed that some companies in the Tuscany area have attached such certificates, but have done so of their own accord and without government

approval. A few months ago the diplomatic representatives of Lebanon, the United Arab Republic, Libya, and Iraq approached the economic department of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a demand that all companies trading with their countries be instructed to attach such certificates. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has totally rejected this demand and instructed its representatives in the Arab states to protest. Negotiations are still in progress and that it is unthinkable that the Italians will succumb to these demands. When the Arabs realized that nothing would come of their approach to the government, they began to pressure the companies and it appears that some of these companies have succumbed to the Arab demands. In reply to a question put to a few of them by the ministry, they explained that these certificates do not prevent them from using Israeli raw materials or employing Israelis or Jews. In conclusion, the director of the department requested that Israel try to understand the situation of these companies and that they have no bad intentions. Sasson stated that he reserves the right to bring up this matter again after reporting to his government and receiving instructions.[3]

Notes

1. No. 119.
2. The reply is on file but has not been printed here.
3. Bartur noted in the margin: "A. Chelouche, N. Eshkol–for consultation. M. Bartur, 29.12."

121. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Rome. 1 January 1959

Copy: 130.18/2053/13

Fischer expresses his thanks for the quick action taken in the matter of the Arab boycott in Italy.[1] They, on their part, will meet with the Italian ambassador[2] and hope that if he reports to his superiors the gravity with which the situation is viewed in Israel it will be of advantage, irrespective of the steps adopted by the Italian government which, at best, will be passive ones. He does not consider the battle lost but it is obvious that no immediate results will be forthcoming. They prefer not to make the matter public in Israel so as not to be of advantage to Arab boycott efforts. In any event, Sasson is requested to investigate the legal implications regarding the injustice being done to Italian Jews, who have equal civil rights in Italy.[3]

Notes

1. No. 120.
2. Giovanni Revedin, the Italian ambassador in Israel. No record of Fischer's conversation with him about the matter has been found.
3. Sasson's reply to this letter has not been found.

122. Sh. Levin (Tokyo) to A. Chelouche (Jerusalem). 21 January 1959

Orig..: 130.18/2053/13

Levin refers to measures being taken to counter Arab boycott activities in Japan.[1] He does not agree with the conclusions expressed in the report received from the businessman Platzko [spelling uncertain]. Direct contacts by the legation have been fruitful, except in certain cases, and information has been forthcoming. It is obvious that the Arabs are applying heavy pressure on Japanese representatives in Arab countries. Israel has reacted by providing information to Japanese officials going to these countries through contacts with their superiors. He presumes that similar steps have been taken in meetings with the Japanese minister in Israel.[3] The Arab representatives in Tokyo are putting pressure on the economic ministries and Japanese economic organisations. Israel has countered this pressure on the economic level, preventing negative results such as cessation of economic ties with Japan. No direct involvement of government agencies can be expected. In any event, steps being taken in Japan must be complemented by contacts with the Japanese minister in Israel. Pressure has also been put on Japanese companies by Arab businessmen and merchants. Since they attained little success in their earlier endeavours, they are making great efforts on this level. Levin appends one of their typical circular letters.[5] In this instance, too, Israel has reacted and has received positive feedback. For example, negotiations are now being conducted for the import of phosphates from Israel. The local company has stated that if the price is right, it would consider increasing imports at the expense of purchases from Egypt. He agrees to the idea of involving American Jewish businessmen,[6] but feels that the major effort should be made in the United States. In conclusion, Israel's stand against the boycott depends on its ability to make the Japanese realise the importance of developing economic ties with Israel. If these efforts are continued together with the constant supply of information, Israel will succeed in countering the boycott.

Notes

1. In File 130.18/2053/14.
2. Chelouche quoted a passage from a report by the businessman K. Platzko, who had visited Japan in October-November 1958 to investigate the possibility of purchasing various items. In his talks with auto manufacturers he had been told that because of their relations with Arab countries they had no intention of exporting to Israel, due to the apprehensions about the reaction of the Arab Boycott Committee. Chelouche asked that Levin raise the issue with the economic echelon and that Minister Najar do the same with the political echelon (document dated 31 December 1958, ibid.).
3. Kuniyoshi Negishi, the Japanese minister in Israel.
4. A conference of Japanese envoys in the Middle East.
5. See "The Arab Boycott of Israel: Its Ground and its Regulations," no date, 130.18/2053/13.
6. See No. 117.
7. The letter had not been found; but see the letter on the same subject, dated 19 October 1958, ibid.

123. Sh. Levin (Tokyo) to the Economic Division. 13 February 1959

Orig.: 130.18/2053/13

Following information that Japanese firms had received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo a copy of the boycott pamphlet distributed by the Arabs,[1] Levin took the matter up with a ministry official, who denied it outright. During the previous week Levin had met with one of the directors of a large Japanese company, who told him that the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had stressed that Japan was interested in maintaining economic relations with Israel, but that there were risks involved and that it would be wise to establish a subsidiary company for this purpose. He was given a copy of the pamphlet. Levin met with the director of the Middle East department's section for economic matters in the ministry who explained that they had received the pamphlet from Cairo and that it was their duty to pass on such information to those requesting it. If Israel provided them with its own information material, they will distribute that as well. It was only after Levin pointed out that the matter could be brought up in an international forum and not necessarily by an Israeli representative, that the official agreed that this had been a mistake and that distribution of the pamphlet should cease. Levin adds that this matter is not at an end and counsels vigilance.

Note

1. See No. 122 and n. 5 there.

124. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Deputy Director of the Economic Division. 14 September 1959

Orig.: 130.18/2053/12

Sasson refers to the exchange of correspondence forwarded by Chelouche, deputy director of the Economic Division, containing details about the refusal of the Italian company, Monte Cattini, to let the Israeli company Fertilizers and Chemicals to participate in a tender for the purchase of expertise.[1] There is no doubt that the Italian company's decision was influenced by the Arab boycott. This is not the only Italian firm to act in this manner. Other large firms in Italy are doing the same and do not conceal this from Israel. How should he react? Sasson suggests that they should not engage in arguments with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other institutions, but rather increase their efforts to penetrate the Italian market and to attain positions that the Arabs and their supporters in Italy would find it difficult to undermine or destroy. Sasson suggests a number of ways to facilitate this penetration such as the appointment of an economic officer at the embassy, visits by business persons, participation in fairs, etc. He criticises Israel's inaction in this area, and concludes that today economic and political policy are interrelated and should not be separated. The ever-increasing ties between Italy and the Arab countries will soon lead to political support of the Arabs and in the end Israel will lose the positions it had attained in the past.[3]

Notes

1. This correspondence is in File 130.18/2053/12. Chelouche sent Sasson a copy of the correspondence between Fertilizers and Chemicals, Ltd., of Haifa, and the Italian firm Monte Cattini, from which it could be inferred that the latter had replied in the negative to the Israeli company's response to an invitation to bid on the purchase of know-how. In Chelouche's estimation, this was due to concern about the Arab boycott. He concluded that "this is, thus, another case that refutes the claim by the Italian Foreign Ministry that we are not interested in developing economic cooperation with Italy; the contrary is the case."
2. See Chapter 14.
3. Chelouche replied that in his opinion Israel should have recourse to all available

means to combat submission to the Arab boycott, and these means should be adapted to each specific case. The worrisome phenomenon was not so much the success of the boycott, which to date had not damaged essential Israeli enterprises, but the very surrender to it. From this perspective the situation in Italy was most distressing and the passive cooperation of the Italian Foreign Ministry was well known.

125. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to M. Couve de Murville (Paris). 15 October 1959

126. M. Couve de Murville (Paris) to G. Meir (Jerusalem). 23 October 1959

Notes

1. No. 125. When Shneerson delivered Meir's Note, Couve de Murville said that the French Foreign Ministry saw "this sad affair as a purely commercial matter. It is absolutely not a political step or assault on the friendly relations between the two countries. It is the intention of the French Foreign Ministry in the future, as well, to develop and broaden these relations. We wish to emphasize this in the most categorical form." (See Shneerson to the M.F.A. et al., telegram 661, 18 October 1959, 130.09/2349/4.)
2. Couve de Murville became foreign minister in June 1958, when de Gaulle was named premier.

127. J. Tsur (Jerusalem) to Minister of Foreign Affairs. 27 October 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3120/22

Tsur believes that Couve de Merville's letter[1] regarding the Renault affair is satisfactory and its tenor is more cordial than could be expected. No one anticipated his personal intervention in this matter, especially since ties had been severed prior to his taking up the position, as Couve de Murville pointed out in his letter. The wish he expressed, that the affair should not becloud the friendly relations between France and Israel, should be

interpreted as a warning to Israel not to turn the commercial controversy into a pretext for cooling political relations. This tallies also with the statement in which he expressed the hope that both sides would refrain from bringing this matter before the public in their respective countries, a step that would be harmful to their mutual interests. The warning is clear and refers to Israeli public opinion only, the mention of "respective countries" being only courtesy.[2]

Notes

1. No. 126.
2. M. Gazit jotted an (unsigned) note in the margin of this paragraph: "What about public opinion in the United States? I suspect that he is referring to it, too?"

128. Résumé of a Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 November 1959

Orig.: 130.18/2053/11

Following upon instructions from Acting Director-General, J. Tsur,[1] a committee consisting of P. Eliav, Y. Vered, A. Chelouche and M. Gazit convened to discuss steps to be taken against the Arab boycott. Following a general discussion, the conclusion of which was that a new approach and innovative procedures were required, the following conclusions were reached.

Organisation should be on two levels: overtly on the public level and covertly on the official level.

As regards the public level, a special, forceful, and durable public body[3] should be created that would replace past organisations that no longer function. The establishment of this body should create the impression of spontaneity and public enterprise, even though the initiative comes from the government.

As for action on the official level, there are two different opinions. One is that a special unit be established in the economic division, which would coordinate its activities with the economic ministries. The other proposal calls for the creation of a special unit that would be subordinate to the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, due to its special character and the need to adopt active economic measures, it would have its own framework and be headed by a person who would have direct access to the ministry's director-general, the minister himself, the economic ministries and the special services.

There is no difference of opinion regarding the content of these activities and it is proposed that the new unit should be active in:

1. Gathering, organizing, and selecting relevant information about the boycott.
2. Clarifying matters on the basis of this information, with the relevant economic bodies.[7]
3. Coordinating and directing relevant non-government economic bodies.
4. Planning of counter-measures to combat the boycott and support those companies hit by it.
5. Seeking out ways to strike the Arab states in the economic field.
6. Constant review of Israel's foreign economic ties in order to take preventive action in cases of Arab pressure.

Measures to be taken overseas were also discussed. It was proposed to appoint persons in the missions abroad to deal specifically with these matters, while continually encouraging them and keeping them up to date. Heads of missions should also be apprised of the special importance of dealing with the boycott. It may well be that special attachés will have to be appointed in the future to deal with this issue. World Jewry also has an important role to play in combating the boycott. The composition of existing committees comprising persons with economic influence in their countries of residence should be reexamined, and the establishment of additional committees should be considered. The organisational apparatus and public bodies established by Jewish communities throughout the world to guarantee the rights of Jews to combat discrimination should also be exploited.

Notes

1. The instructions are in File 130.23/3356/33. Tsur assigned these four, along with Moshe Sasson, to draft and present recommendations for organizing activity against the Arab boycott.
2. Tsur added a marginal note alongside these paragraphs: "There is no contradiction between the two views."
3. Tsur added a marginal note next to this paragraph: "All parties that have the

capacity to help—who are they?" Below "establishment of a public body" he noted, "what is its function?"

4. A government agency that was active in the West disseminating information about immigration to Israel from the Soviet Union and its satellites.
5. Tsur added a marginal note alongside this sentence: "I tend to this opinion."
6. A number of words have been omitted.
7. Tsur added a marginal note alongside sections 1 and 2: "Enumerate."

129. J. Tsur (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 8 November 1959

Copy: 130.18/2053/11

Tsur reports that he has accepted the recommendation of the special committee on the boycott[1] which unanimously agreed that a clear policy for combating the boycott should be defined. Of the two proposals for action to be taken, which were not unanimously agreed upon, he has accepted that which proposes the establishment of a special division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deal with anti-boycott measures. He also accepts the proposal to appoint special attachés in the United States and Europe, and possibly in Latin America. The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and perhaps also the Jewish Agency, should be involved in planning. A coordinator of the program should be appointed as soon as possible, one with both an economic and an intelligence background.[2]

Notes

1. No. 128.
2. At a meeting in the M.F.A. on 10 December 1959, it was decided to advise the minister of foreign affairs to set up a special division in the ministry to combat the Arab boycott. (See summary of the meeting, with that date, 130.18/2053/11.) The unit began operations in early 1960, under the rubric of the Division for Politico-Economic Planning. See Vol. 14, Chapter 4.

130. N. Eshkol [Jerusalem] to M. Gazit (Jerusalem). 27 November 1959

Copy: 130.18/2053/11

Eshkol summarizes a number of activities and developments in the anti-boycott campaign.

Only two committees have been established specifically to counter the boycott: by the Conference of Presidents in the United States and by the Board of Deputies in Britain. To the extent that assistance of Jews was required in other countries, this is being done ad hoc through the Zionist Federations.

The number of cases in which World Jewry has been activated is minimal, and even that only by pressuring companies that have already severed ties with Israel as a result of the boycott. Success has been only partial. American Express has resumed its activities in Israel, though on a different basis than previously; B.O.A.C. has also restored its service. On the other hand, counter-measures have failed in the case of the Shell Company, since, due to political considerations, these measures have been stopped. Steps are presently being taken against Renault and there are also results in other cases.

The attitudes of Jewish organisations are not uniform. The greatest willingness and ability to act exists in the United States. In many cases the fact that the boycotted companies employ Jewish agents and work with Jewish firms makes action difficult.

The poor effects achieved so far are the result of the following:

1. Some countries do not approve of their citizens boycotting goods from foreign countries.
2. Companies sensitive to Israeli counter-measures are those producing consumer goods with a large Jewish market, but in most cases they do not have economic significance as regards Israel.
3. Large-scale expansion of counter-measures against the boycott disperses the efforts and reduces their effectiveness.
4. Action is taken only against companies that used to trade with Israel and have ceased doing so, but no action is taken against companies that had been planning to trade with Israel but on second thoughts had backed away.

The possibility of reactivating Jewish organisations overseas in additional ways should be investigated. This would include supplying them with information about the boycott, or using them to adversely effect Arab

exports (though a first study of such a possibility has revealed that its results would be negative).

Whatever measures are to be taken, the situation of the local Jewish communities and their economic interests must be taken into account.

131. Political Research Division and the Economic Division [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 21 December 1959

Copy: 130.18/2053/11

The document contains a report of events and measures regarding the Arab boycott.

In August 1959, a conference of Arab boycott officials was held in Beirut. It took a number of decisions in principle regarding the intensification of the boycott and especially to put pressure on German and Turkish companies trading with Israel. It was also resolved to expand the campaign against Israel's contacts with Asian and African states. Also discussed were Israel's economic ties with Cyprus, and it was further decided to impose a boycott on ships carrying immigrants to Israel.

The Arab have achieved only partial success. Pressure was brought to bear on the Government of Turkey, but it has resisted it and there is no evidence of submission to the boycott. As regards Germany—there has been no evidence of pressure being applied on any German company since the conference. As for Asia and Africa, the Arabs are active there, but so far without any results since they are unable to offer any concrete alternative to Israeli aid. On the other hand, the Cypriots have submitted to the boycott and the boycott of ships has been effective. About 100 ships are presently on the black list. The Arabs have also been successful in deterring companies that at present do not have connections with Israel from doing so. An example is the Italian company Monte Cattini, which manufactures medical and chemical products.

Notes

1. See Chapter 14.
2. See No. 119.
3. The memorandum has not been located.
4. The second part of the document, with several examples of steps taken against the Arab boycott, has been omitted.

132. M. Comay [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 11 November 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3085/15

Comay transmits to the minister of foreign affairs the outline of Israel's position for the forthcoming debate on the refugee problem at the United Nations.[1] This outline is based on a résumé prepared by Eban following a consultation held in Israel on 3 November:[2]

1. A description of the events leading to the creation of the problem.

2. Laying stress on the responsibility of the Arab states for not solving the problem in spite of the favourable conditions for its settlement (land, sovereignty etc.).

3. Defines the solution—absorption of the refugees in the Arab countries with aid from the United Nations, the Powers and Israel, with simultaneous planning for the development of the Middle East.

4. Israel's position: (a) Opposition to repatriation and to the right of choice.[3] (b) Readiness to contribute to a settlement, the essential part of which would be absorption in the Arab countries. (c) Payment of compensation, but with international aid. (d) Possibility of extending the plan for the unification of families.

Comay points out that he had no opportunity of discussing the matter with Eban before the latter's departure, but he has reservations about paragraph 4. The unspecific phrasing of subparagraph (b) may raise questions about what Israel has exactly in mind, especially as the payment of compensation and the reunification of families are mentioned in another subparagraph. The impression may be given that Israel would agree to partial repatriation of the refugees, which impression would be strengthened by the expression "essential part" which appears there. If in fact there is no intention of permitting such a partial repatriation, it would be preferable to delete this subparagraph altogether, or to phrase it in such a way that it would be very clear that readiness to reach a settlement signifies only the payment of compensation and the reunification of families, and nothing else.

As to compensation, Israel has in the past made it conditional on the repeal of the Arab boycott. This stipulation has met with criticism on the part of Israel's friends, who wonder why the refugees should be made to suffer because of hostile acts by the Arab states against Israel. The omission of this condition constitutes therefore a certain change in Israel's position.

Comay requests the minister's comments with all urgency, as he has to

cable the definitive version to New York before Israel's turn comes at the debate, which has already begun.[4]

Notes

1. Since 1950, the U.N. General Assembly had been discussing the problem of the Arab refugees from Palestine as part of its debate on the annual report submitted by the director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).
2. See Comay to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U.N., 5 November 1958, 130.03/2084/10. It was decided to maintain Israel's position of the previous year, while emphasizing its willingness to make a fair contribution in the context of general progress toward resettlement of the refugees.
3. Between the refugees' return to their previous places of residence in Israel and their remaining where they were currently living and receiving compensation.
4. Comay informed Eban (telegram TNW808, 13 November 1958, in File 130.09/2339/28) that the foreign minister had approved his summary, except for several changes in the spirit of his comments on section 4. For the final formulation of the Israeli position, see No. 133, n. 2.

133. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 November 1958

Coded Tel. NWT73; Inc.: 130.09/2339/10

Tekoah sums up the second week of the debate on the refugee problem.[1] Tension has increased and so has participation in the debate. There is nothing new in what the Arabs said, but they are supported by the Afro-Asian bloc. In contrast, Israel's supporters have kept a low profile. The Latin-Americans, who support Israel as a rule, do not stand out. Eban's two speeches[2] have left their mark on the debate, and those looking for practical ways of solving the problem will be able to point to the proposal for compensation mentioned in them. On the other hand, Shuqairi's proposal to appoint a custodian of the refugees' property[3] was met with more approval, than it deserved. Eban intends to clarify this point in his next speech.[4] The real struggle is of course taking place behind the scenes, and all are searching for appropriate formulas for the draft resolution. The secretary-general is most active and his efforts are now aimed at appointing Labouisse as sole rapporteur and limiting his authority to the technical aspects of the methods of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in

the Near East. The Americans, on the other hand, claim that there has been no significant change in their position that the mandate of the Agency must not be routinely and indefinitely prolonged. Israel is making efforts to mobilize support for its proposal of compensation and for its choice of rapporteur.

Notes

1. In early November the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly began its deliberations on the problem of the Arab refugees. The debate began with the report of the director of UNRWA, Leslie J. Carver.
2. Eban spoke on 17 and 19 November. On the 17th, he said that Israel was willing to pay compensation to refugees even before it reached peace accords with the Arab countries, on two conditions: that the refugees be rehabilitated in the countries where they were presently living and that Israel receive international financial assistance. He added that the determination of the level of compensation must take account of Israeli claims regarding property left behind by Jews in Arab countries. On the 19th, Eban said that the Arab countries, by maintaining a state of war with Israel and imposing a boycott and blockade against it, denied it the economic capacity to implement its compensation policy. Accordingly it was just and logical to make any Israeli commitment to pay compensation contingent on the existence of peace in the region. Nevertheless, Israel's undertaking to pay compensation remained in force and was not, in its eyes, merely an abstract principle. (See *GAOR, 13th Session, Special Political Committee*, 106th and 108th meetings, pp. 85 and 97.)
3. On 18 November 1958, Shukairi rejected Eban's offer of compensation for the refugees and said that no plan could serve as a substitute for the refugees' return. He estimated the value of the refugees' property in Israel at $2 billion and asserted that when their property was restored the refugees would waive further aid. He proposed the appointment of a custodian of refugee property. (See *GAOR, 13th Session, Special Political Committee*, 107th Meeting, p. 87.)
4. Speaking on 24 November, Eban rejected Shuqairi's assertion that 94% of the land of mandatory Palestine had belonged to Arabs and that $2 billion in compensation should be paid for it. What is more, the Arab-owned lands had belonged to a small number of families, while most of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine had been tenant farmers. Hence the payment of compensation would have no effect on most of the refugees. By the same token, Israel had no lands or property that produced revenues that could be used to pay compensation. (See ibid., 111th meeting, 24 November 1958, p. 110.)

134. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 December 1958

Coded Tel. NWT102; Inc.: 130.09/2339/10

Tekoah sums up the ten-days' recess in the debate on the refugees. The Americans' intention was to stand by their demands and thus to force the Arabs to retreat.[1] This line met with success, and Shuqairi's extremism was replaced by the moderation demonstrated by the Egyptian delegate.[2] This development caused the Arabs to abandon their objection to any sort of survey of the possibilities of solving the refugee problem. If the Arabs had been left alone to face the Americans they could perhaps have been forced to retreat still further, but they received some support from the secretary-general and the British.[3] What prevented the Americans from going all the way was the threat that a draft resolution opposed by the Arabs would have resulted in a conflict between them and the West, rendering the survey inoperative, inciting the refugees in the camps and facilitating Soviet intervention. The presence of Beeley, who had been the author of para 11 in the 1948 resolution,[4] did not contribute to the American endeavours.

The Israel delegation was active with both the American and other delegations in order to prevent the American retreat. The general tendency displayed by other delegations was to leave the campaign to the Americans.

As the date of the vote approaches, it appears that the Americans are willing to abandon their original draft and are prepared to compromise. It is not clear whether this willingness will affect the survey itself adversely.

Notes

1. On 10 November, Harrison, the U.S. representative, told the Special Political Committee that his country, which covered 70% of the UNRWA budget, was not in full accord with its operating methods. A better method should be found to accelerate the refugees' advance toward economic independence. He added that more than $300 million had been spent in the agency's decade of existence but no real solution was visible on the horizon. In the past, he said, the United States had agreed to the extension of UNRWA's mandate from 1954 to 1960 in order to carry out development projects. He quoted the remarks made by the U.S. delegate in 1954, to the effect that should these projects not be implemented, the United States would reconsider its position. (See *GAOR, 13th Session, Special Political Committee*, 102nd Meeting, 10 November 1958, p. 67)
2. At a meeting with the U.S. delegation to the U.N., the Egyptian representative, Salah Gohar, said that Egypt was prepared to agree to re-examine the future of assistance to the refugees after 1960, on condition that this be done through diplomatic

channels and not at the United Nations. (See Tov to the M.F.A., NWT86, 26 November 1958, 130.09/2339/10.)

3. The British delegate, Harold Beeley, said that the solution to the refugee problem would be found in a combination of repatriation and compensation.
4. See Introduction, p. xxiii; Vol. 2, Appendix G. According to this section, refugees who wished to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours would be allowed to do so; compensation for the property they left behind would be paid to those who preferred not to return.
5. No details of this conversation have been found.

135. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1958

Coded Tel. NWT103; Inc.: 130.09/2339/10

Tekoah transmits the draft resolution framed by the United States delegation. He has received this draft, in confidence, from the Dutch representative, who said that the Netherlands' agreement to sponsor this resolution depends on the stand taken by Israel's delegation. Later Tekoah received the same draft from the Americans, again in confidence. [For the text of the draft resolution, see Main Volume, pp. 230-231]

Tekoah met Harrison of the American delegation and requested that a number of changes be made in the draft. He requested in particular that the term "repatriation" not be used; if this should prove impossible, then at least the term "resettlement" should be added. Tekoah urgently requests comments from Israel to enable him to use them during the debate.[2]

Notes

1. In this telegram (dated 5 December 1958, 130.09/2339/10), Tekoah reported that he had heard that Carver had prepared a draft resolution, which had not been accepted by the State Department, requesting Hammarskjöld to submit recommendations about future assistance and rehabilitation of the refugees to the next General Assembly.
2. Comay's response was that displeasure should be expressed to the Americans over their failure to consult with Israel and show it the draft directly. (See Comay to Tekoah, TNW864, 7 December 1958, 130.09/2339/28.)

136. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 9 December 1958

Coded Tel. NWT114; Inc.: 130.09/2339/10

At a meeting with members of the American delegation, Tekoah was informed that the Arabs had told them that they oppose Article 7 in the draft resolution.[1] This has caused concern to the Americans and the other sponsors.[2] Though a majority for the draft resolution is assured, the fear is that Article 7 will be obstructed in the plenum and thus the entire resolution will be devoid of content. The British have already prepared an alternative draft, but Israel, supported by the Dutch, has insisted on the inclusion of this article. Its omission as a result of Arab pressure would spell the end of any prospects of adopting a substantive resolution at the next Assembly. The Americans eventually decided to submit the resolution as drafted by them, though the secretary-general also fears that the proposed formulation of that Article might be construed as shouldering him with the responsibility for submitting the proposals to the next Assembly. The Americans will attempt in their speeches to ensure that what the sponsors say does not intensify Arab opposition.

Notes

1. See No. 135.
2. Great Britain, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.

137. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 December 1958

Coded Tel. NWT117; Inc.: 130.09/2339/10

From talks with the Americans and the other sponsors Tekoah has learned about the considerations leading to the omission of Article 7.[1]

1. From the very beginning, the secretary-general wished to avoid a vote on a resolution that would be opposed by the Arabs. He argued that such a resolution would make it difficult for UNRWA to carry on with its work and would lead to a grave crisis between the Arabs and the West.

2. The secretary-general does not wish to undertake any task not to the Arabs' liking, not even the limited role allotted to him in Article 7.

3. The Americans fear that a negative vote will totally preclude the submission of proposals to the next Assembly.

4. There is also the fear that if Article 7 were passed, the Arabs would refuse to cooperate with the survey and would prevent its being carried out in their countries.

5. The Americans consider that, once they have withdrawn their demand to study the refugee problem in its entirety, the exact formulation on which the secretary-general bases his limited study on the continuation of the aid will lose its importance.

All the above considerations led the Americans to agree that the secretary-general would persuade the Arabs to abstain if Article 7 were replaced by a statement by himself. If he had failed in that, the sponsors would have submitted the draft in its original version.

Note

1. During the discussion of the refugee problem in the Special Political Committee, Secretary-General Hammarskjöld stated that in light of the situation that the General Assembly would face the next year, he would investigate, by virtue of his position, UNRWA's technical activity and draft recommendations that in his opinion could be of assistance if submitted in timely fashion to the General Assembly so that it could discuss them at its 14th session. The U.S. delegate replied that in light of the secretary-general's statement the sponsors of the draft resolution were willing to delete the operative article, No. 7. (See *GAOR, 13th Session, 125th Meeting*, 10 December 1958, p. 183.)

138. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 December 1958

Coded Tel. NWT125; Inc.: 130.02/2339/10

Eban sums up the debate on the refugee problem. The Special Political Committee voted for a resolution identical to last year's, with the addition of a statement by Hammarskjöld that he would offer recommendations for U.N. activity in the next year[1]. Even this, however, did not satisfy the Arabs, and because of that statement and the lack of a promise by the United States to extend the aid beyond 1960, they abstained in the voting. The Israel delegation feels that the debate resulted in the continuation of the status quo

for another year, and that no demands of Israel are to be expected from the United Nations at present. The Americans went wrong in not properly preparing the shock they wanted to give the Arabs. Also, they received no support from the other sponsors.

Tension with the Arabs will continue, but the battleground will now be the United States Congress. Eban thinks that this tension is to Israel's tactical advantage, but he doubts whether Israel would have been in a position of strength if the status quo had indeed been upset and the entire refugee problem had been debated anew. The new definition of Israel's stand on compensation will prove an asset with public opinion; indeed, favourable reactions have started coming in.

Notes

1. The 13th session of the General Assembly considered the question of Hungary. At the end of the debate a resolution was adopted that, inter alia, called on the Soviet Union and Hungary to avoid repressive steps against the Hungarian people. Fearing that support for the resolution would have a negative impact on the prospects for immigration from Hungary, Israel decided to abstain; ultimately, however, it was absent from the vote.
2. See No. 137. For the final text of the resolution as passed, see No. 151 (Appendix A). The resolution adopted in 1957 called, inter alia, on the U.N. secretary-general to make efforts to find additional funding for UNRWA, in light of its grave economic situation.
3. As was customary, two senators were included in the U.S. delegation–Mike Mansfield (Democrat, Montana) and Bourke Hickenlooper (Republican, Iowa).
4. For the discussion of Israel's complaint about border incidents with Syria, see No. 164.
5. The letter, dated 12 December 1958, is in File 130.02/5934/6.
6. Assistant Secretary of State William Rountree toured the Middle East in December 1958.

139. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 28 June 1959

Copy: 130.03/2084/11

Comay refers to the report on UNRWA by the secretary-general of the United Nations. Comay's review of this report is the result of his personal thoughts; it should not be accepted as guidelines for action but only as points for further consideration.

The report's importance lies in its basic assumption that the problem is one that touches first and foremost the Arab states. The refugees are an Arab problem and the solution must be found within the confines of the Arab world: they must be absorbed with the aid of natural economic processes. This assumption conforms with Israel's position and it is bound to lead to vigorous opposition by the Arabs.

The continuation of aid for an indeterminate period may not be approved by the donor countries, and by the United States in particular. Israel is interested in continued aid for the refugees, but it believes that only the threat of closing UNRWA down will force the Arabs to come to terms with reality and that is why it encouraged the American initiative in the last assembly.[3] The secretary-general does recommend that the activities of UNRWA continue, but assigns it a more limited role, which, according to him, should not include development planning. It is true that his concept is that the absorption of the refugees will come about as a side effect of the development of the Arab countries, but this development should not be shouldered by the United Nations. UNRWA should limit itself to providing aid to the old among the refugees and vocational instruction to the younger generation.

Israel's role in the solution of the problem is hardly mentioned in the report. Apart from a quite moderately phrased reference to the 1948 resolution, there is practically no mention of repatriation as a solution for the future. There is also retreat from the principle of the freedom of choice. Israel's conditional agreement to the payment of compensation[4] gets only marginal mention.

The second part of the report is devoted to practical methods for improving the Agency's efficiency, on the assumption that it will continue to exist for a longer period.

Comay agrees with Yahil's letter that Israel should avoid a controversial debate over the report. Obviously, the impression should not be created that Israel agrees to what is said in it with no reservations, but restraint is preferable here. If the report results in controversy between the secretary-general and the Arab states, or among the Arab states themselves, then the offensive against Israel will be undermined and Israel's position will be strengthened. Israel should adhere to the line it has adopted since the Suez war—non-involvement in any of the regional conflicts.

Comay welcomes comments or reactions to be sent by return mail.

Notes

1. In File 93.03/497/2.
2. The report is attached but has been omitted here.

3. See No. 134 and n. 1 there.
4. See No. 133 and n. 2 there.
5. The U.A.R., Jordan, and Lebanon.
6. The appendices are in the file but have been omitted here.

140. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 November 1959

Coded Tel. NWT832; Inc.: 130.09/2339/14

Comay and Tekoah discussed with Bartlett and Buffum the debate on the refugee problem at the United Nations. The Americans think they should avoid public statements during the first stages of the debate, as this will facilitate contacts with the Arabs behind the scenes. They think it is not impossible that the Arabs will display some readiness to make progress in attacking the refugee issue, and in any case this possibility should be explored during the first stages of the debate. In the meantime the British, together with the Canadians and the Australians, are attempting to frame a draft resolution on the key issue: the future of UNRWA. Two possibilities seem to be available: to propose to extend the Agency's mandate for an additional five years, in which case a new resolution would be necessary for the Agency's work to continue; or, to extend the mandate for an indefinite period, while adding a proviso that after three years the Assembly will discuss again the Agency's work. As to Hammarskjöld's practical recommendations for increasing the Agency's efficiency, these need not be detailed in the resolution and their implementation can be left to Davis.[1]

Note

1. John Davis, director of UNRWA from 15 February 1959.

141. M. Comay (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 November 1959

Coded Tel. NWT838; Inc.: 130.09/2339/14

Comay has talked with several delegations in preparation for the debate on the refugees. The Americans will not say what resolution they would be prepared to support, but they do not regard as satisfactory the prolongation

of UNRWA's mandate on the present terms. They learned their lesson last year and now prefer not to take the initiative but to await the proposals of other delegations.

The New Zealanders still insist, as they did last year, that Israel must fulfill its obligations according to the resolutions of the United Nations. The Canadians are still studying the issue, and so are the Norwegians. The Australians are trying to frame a draft resolution based on Davis's advice, but will not submit it until the picture clears. Davis said that American pressure on the Assembly "to face up to the problem" would result in increased pressure on Israel.

The delegation is accordingly making efforts to convince the friendly delegations that Israel is doing everything possible under the circumstances and they should ease up on the pressure. Israel's gestures of good will are also being stressed, such as the freeing of blocked accounts.[1] Hood, of the Australian delegation, has suggested that Israel announce its willingness to admit for undergraduate and graduate studies in agricultural technology a number of students who would later be allowed to stay in the country if they so wished. Hood says such an announcement would make a favourable impression on the Afro-Asian delegations. What is your opinion?[2]

Notes

1. On 4 December 1956 Israel informed the Palestine Conciliation Commission of its decision to gradually release refugees' accounts in Israeli banks. By the end of 1958, two foreign banks operating in the country, Barclay's and the Ottoman Bank, had unblocked deposits worth £2.5 million. Accounts in Israeli banks, with a value of £140,000, were not released because of Finance Ministry objections. On 7 August 1958 the government decided that should it be found that the promise to the Palestine Conciliation Commission included accounts in Israeli banks, they too would be unblocked.
2. Yahil responded that he did not like Hood's proposal. There was room to fear that the Arabs would ridicule it, "and why should we allow ourselves to be humiliated?" (See Yahil to Comay, telegram 834, 23 November 1959, 130.09/2333/18.)

142. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 22 November 1959

Coded Tel. TNW689; Outg.: 130.09/2313/1

At their meeting with the prime minister, Senators Gore and McGee[1] proposed a plan to facilitate progress on the refugee issue. They suggested

that the Palestine Conciliation Commission be revived and its membership extended, or that another international mediating body be set up. This was, in effect, what Nasser had proposed to them when they saw him in Cairo. They said that they had noted in their talks in Egypt and Jordan some softening in the Arab position. They said the Arabs know that total repatriation is out of the question, and the senators think it was a matter of emotion and prestige. They suggest that the new body study the possibilities of resettlement, while the principle of repatriation would be implemented "only as a trickle".

The prime minister said he doubts whether there has been any change in Nasser's position. He stressed that Israel is prepared to cooperate in solving the refugee issue either through direct negotiations or with the aid of mediation, and does make the solution conditional on a general peace settlement. He prefers American mediation to that by the United Nations, but does not reject the possibility of a United Nations mediating body. The prime minister then asked whether Gore would be prepared to convey his answer directly to Nasser. Gore replied that he will report to the president and to Hammarskjöld. His impression is that some progress has been made on the Israeli side as well. He stressed that actual steps could be taken only after the elections in the United States, when a new and energetic team from his own party will take over.[3]

Notes

1. Senators Gore and McGee visited a number of Middle Eastern countries in November 1959.
2. The reference is to Robert Anderson, who attempted to mediate between Israel and Egypt in January 1956, as President Eisenhower's special representative.
3. The U.S. presidential elections were to take place on 8 November 1960.
4. According to another telegram (691, dated 23 November 1959, in File 130.09/2313/1), Gore had been asked to treat Ben-Gurion's remarks as off-the-record. He agreed and said that he would report to the president only after he returned to Washington from the Middle East in mid-December. He estimated that in 1960 it would be possible to engage only in preliminary work and that substantive activity would not be possible until 1961.

143. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 November 1959

Coded Tel. NWT879; Inc.: 130.09/2339/14

Tekoah has learned from the American delegation that they have been instructed to demand amendments in the draft resolution submitted by Pakistan.[1] [for the amendments, See Main Volume, p. 244.] The Arabs have promised to study the proposed amendments and to give their reply. Tekoah stresses that these amendments are only the beginning and that others will follow. At any rate, he has told the Americans that Israel opposes the revival of the Palestine Conciliation Commission. Also, the Turkish delegate, in his speech at the Special Political Commission's session yesterday,[2] referred to the 1952 resolution and not to that of 1948. According to the 1952 formulation, the parties would have to reach a settlement through direct negotiations.

The Americans replied that they had not yet made up their minds and that they first wished to hear both parties. Tekoah has requested that they maintain contact with Israel through all the stages of the amendments. He has also said Israel would give its reply to their proposals shortly.[3]

Notes

1. On 23 November 1959, Pakistan and Indonesia submitted a draft resolution (U.N. Document A/SPC/L.38) to extend the mandate of UNRWA for another five years. Nothing was said about the revival or expansion of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, which was mentioned only in the section that requested UNRWA to consult with it. A section in this spirit had been part of the proposals relating to the refugees in previous years.
2. Speaking on 25 November, the Turkish delegate, Turgut Menemencioglu, quoted General Assembly resolution (VI) 512, of 26 January 1952, which noted that the Palestine Conciliation Commission had not managed to fulfill its mandate as set by the resolutions of previous sessions of the General Assembly and laid the main responsibility for achieving a solution on the affected governments, which were called on to avail themselves of the services of the United Nations, including the Palestine Conciliation Commission. (See *GAOR, 14th Session, Special Political Committee*, 158th Meeting, 25 November 1959, pp. 139-140.)
3. Yahil replied: "Concentrate efforts against the revival and expansion of the Conciliation Commission. We will respond to the other points in your telegram after holding consultations. Suggest not referring to the 1952 resolution that speaks of a settlement in accordance with U.N. resolutions and calls on the Conciliation Commission to work to implement them." (See Telegram TNW706, in File 130.09/2340/7.)

144. M. Comay (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 November 1959

Coded Tel. NWT885; Inc.: 130.09/2339/14

Comay reports on developments and contacts in connection with the draft resolution on the refugee issue. The Israel delegation is vigorously objecting to the revival of the Palestine Conciliation Commission or to the establishment of a new, similar body. Comay spoke yesterday with Hancher of the American delegation and reiterated this objection. Hancher said they were maintaining contact with the Arabs, who had already submitted their proposals.

Comay thinks Israel should convince some friendly delegations that they should get the Americans to amend their proposals. Israel had submitted a number of formulations to the Australians and the Dutch[1] with the intention that they submit them as their own.

The amendments are being cabled separately. The most important of them is one requiring the Assembly to instruct the Conciliation Commission to consult with the parties on the basis of the 1948 and 1952 resolutions. Its importance lies in defining the Commission's function as secondary to the parties' obligation to reach an agreement through direct negotiations, and in its being based on both the 1948 and 1952 resolutions and not solely on the 1948 one.

Note

1. See Comay to Tsur, Yahil, and Harman, NWT886, 29 November 1959, 130.09/2339/10.

145. Ch. Yahil (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 29 November 1959

Coded Tel. TNW708; Outg.: 130.09/2340/3

Yahil reports that the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs have discussed the messages received from the delegation[1] and have concluded that Israel should not try and insert amendments into a resolution to which it objects *in toto* in the first place. Israel should express its vigorous opposition to any resolution that refers to any issue but the refugees issue

itself, and it will not cooperate with any U.N. body appointed to deal with obsolete issues such as the 1948 resolution, or even that of 1952. Israel's position remains as expressed in Eban's speech of last year.[2] Israel's claims against the Arabs, such as the Jewish property in Iraq, and Jewish settlements near Hebron and north of Jerusalem, should also be mentioned. Israel is prepared to discuss the refugee issue but it must stress that a solution will be found only through the settlement of the refugees in Arab countries. These guidelines also apply to Comay's planned talk with Wilcox,[3] and Comay should emphasize that Israel welcomes American mediation on this issue.

Notes

1. See No. 144 and n. 1 there.
2. See No. 133, n. 2.
3. See No. 146.

146. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 November 1959

Coded Tel. 945; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Harman reports on his discussion with Wilcox regarding the forthcoming debate on the refugee problem at the United Nations. Ludlow and Palmer were also present. In reply to Wilcox's question from the previous meeting,[1] Harman said that Israel wishes to make progress in resolving this issue. In Israel's opinion, the best way to achieve this is through direct negotiations. If it turns out that the time is not ripe for such a step, then Israel would be prepared for the Americans to initiate contacts with the Arabs.

To Harman's question, Wilcox replied that the Americans have not yet reached a clear-cut opinion. It seems to them that some instrument is necessary to advance a solution, and they think that the Palestine Conciliation Commission is the right body to do it. Harman replied that there are two aspects to this idea. If the Americans wish to use the Commission as an instrument of mediation between the parties, they will find no objection from Israel. If, however, the intention is to revive the Commission's mandate to deal with impractical proposals, then Israel would definitely be opposed. Israel fears that the proposed resolution would

come out too close to the classical Arab concept of freedom of choice for the refugees.

Wilcox was quick to deny this possibility. He said that the Department of State have lately been encouraged by its talks with the Arabs and sense a change in their attitude. He thinks Israel could give the necessary push to convert this state of mind into genuine progress. He is not empowered to suggest any particular step to Israel, whether to issue a suitable statement or to announce discreetly some sort of goodwill gesture, but he thinks the time is ripe for that.

Ludlow added reasons why he thinks the Palestine Conciliation Commission was the right instrument. Direct negotiations cannot yet take place, and the Commission could serve as a cloak for the Arabs. Since they are suspicious and touchy, it would be best to use an existing institution. Wilcox added that, because the United States has been accused of creating and strengthening Israel, it is the Americans who have to make the first move, together with Israel. It would be worthwhile for Israel to make some concession and to suffer loss of face, so long as the problem is solved.

Harman replied that Israel has had long experience of disillusionment following concessions and cited the freeing of the blocked accounts.[5] Not one of the concessions has evoked a positive reaction or reciprocity. Complex international issues, such as those of Cyprus and Trieste, were solved through negotiations outside the framework of the United Nations, and perhaps such a way could be found here too.

Harman's conclusions: it is quite possible that the Americans have not yet made up their minds on the phrasing of the resolution. They may yet take Israel's warnings into account. They also accept Israel's position that the solution of the problem lies mainly outside its borders. They think that the Arabs may have drawn closer to that conception but they also think that progress depends on further clarification of Israel's position. The Department of State is toying with the idea that the resolution must exert pressure on Israel, and the revival of the Palestine Conciliation Commission would serve this purpose. In his reply to the Americans, he took the line that this would lead them into the Arabs' trap and would put Israel in a position where it would not be able to cooperate. More pressure is needed to increase American fears that an ill-conceived resolution at this time would prevent the very progress they wish to achieve.

Notes

1. The conversation took place on 25 November 1959. For a report on it, see Harman to the M.F.A., WNT941, 25 November 1959, 130.09/2314/9. Wilcox asked whether it

was permissible to assume that Israel was willing to take a step that would make it possible to break the deadlock on the refugee problem.

2. See No. 142.
3. A number of words are missing in the original.
4. See Chapter 14.
5. See No. 141 and n. 1 there.
6. A number of words are missing in the original.

147. Ch. Yahil (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 2 December 1959

Coded Tel. TNW719; Outg.: 130.09/2340/3

Yahil reports on the talk the minister of foreign affairs had with Ambassador Reid about the refugee problem. Mrs. Meir restated Israel's position: Israel wants a solution to be found to the problem, is prepared to do its best in that regard, and has also made goodwill concessions, such as the reunification of families and the releasing of the blocked accounts, but these have evoked no reaction from the other side. She stressed Israel's willingness to pay compensation to the refugees and its readiness to separate this issue from that of the general relations between Israel and the Arabs. She mentioned Israel's claims regarding Jewish property in Arab countries. She understands well Congress's hesitations about spending money endlessly, but Israel cannot agree to the revival of the 1948 resolution and the renewal of the Palestine Conciliation Commission's mandate. The idea of freedom of choice and repatriation is unacceptable. In her opinion, Hammarskjöld's constructive statements could point the right way to the solution of the problem. Israel is prepared to accept some sort of intermediary between it and the Arabs, which would lead to direct or indirect negotiations, but this has nothing to do with the 1948 resolution, which is definitely defunct.

Reid asked whether Israel would agree to the Commission's acting only in respect of the refugee problem, with no connection to the 1948 resolution. Mrs. Meir said that Israel would accept the Commission's good offices in bringing the parties to direct or indirect negotiations. Israel's opposition to the right of repatriation is irrevocable, and nobody has the right to force Israel to commit suicide. Israel would be prepared to help in the settlement of the refugees financially and also with technical advice and instruction. It would also be prepared to admit a limited number of refugees, say 10,000 to 20,000, on condition that this would be the final group to be admitted.

Note

1. See No. 142.

148. M. Comay (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 December 1959

Coded Tel. NWT905; Inc.: 130.09/2339/20

Comay reports on the contacts with the American delegation regarding the phrasing of the draft resolution on the refugee problem. They have shown the Israelis an amended draft, which has already been cabled to Jerusalem.[1] The Americans have tried to convince the Israeli representatives that this draft does not, in effect, demand any substantive action of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, and advised Israel not to inflate the issue out of proportion by bringing it to public knowledge. The Israeli delegation rejected the Americans' arguments, but failed to convince them. The latter said that their instructions originate in Washington and it is there that any counter-arguments should be submitted. As to the other amendments, it appeares that they have reached a compromise with the Arabs on the prolongation of UNRWA's mandate for three more years, with a review after two years.

On the assumption that the amendments will be submitted tomorrow and the voting will take place on Friday, the delegation suggests the following actions in the Political Committee: To vote against the Article on the Palestine Conciliation Commission. Rather than being the only member opposing aid to the refugees, to abstain on the resolution as a whole, which should serve to avoid censure of Israel's moral attitude. After the vote is taken, to avoid making public statements on its refusal to cooperate with the Conciliation Commission, mainly in order not to appear as flouting United Nations' resolutions. When the Assembly has dispersed and the Palestine Conciliation Commission approaches Israel, Israel could reconsider the position.

The delegation requests approval of the above line.[3]

Notes

1. This telegram contained the full final text of the section relating to the Conciliation Commission, as follows: "Requests the Palestine Conciliation Commission to re-examine the possibility of securing the implementation of para. 11 of resolution

194(III)." (See Tekoah to Yahil and Harman, telegram 904, 3 December 1959, 130.09/2339/20.)

2. Details of this conversation have not been found.
3. In her reply, Mrs. Meir noted that Israel related with great seriousness to the American amendment, even in its new version. She accordingly instructed the delegation to oppose the section that referred to the Palestine Conciliation Commission and to abstain on the resolution itself. (See telegram TNW725, 3 December 1959, 130.09/2340/3.)

149. M. Comay (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 December 1959

Coded Tel. NWT914; Inc.: 130.09/2339/20

Comay reports that the American delegation has come to an understanding with the delegations of Jordan, the U.A.R., and Lebanon on the final phrasing of the resolution. The draft will not be submitted by the Americans: the Arabs will see to it that it is submitted by, most probably, Indonesia and Pakistan.[1]

Comay's conclusion, shared by the delegation and the embassy, is that the American delegation has carried out its task and that there is no use arguing with it. The only possible intervention would be at Harman's meeting with Herter tomorrow,[2] but it would be improbable to expect the Americans to go back on their agreement with the Arabs at this late stage, unless the Arabs themselves are intransigent and retreat from the understanding. The delegation thinks it best to vote against the Article on the Palestine Conciliation Commission and to abstain on the resolution as a whole. An attempt will be made to persuade some of the friendly delegations at least to abstain on the Palestine Conciliation Commission Article and to explain their abstention as drawing attention to the necessity of direct contact between the parties.

Notes

1. On 5 December, Pakistan and Indonesia did submit an amended draft (U.N. Document A/SPC/L38/Rev.1). This text was adopted by the plenum on 9 December 1959, by a vote of 80 in favour and none opposed. Israel voted against section 4 and abstained in the final vote. For the full text of the resolution, see No. 151 (Appendix A).
2. See No. 150.

150. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 December 1959

Coded Tel. WNT950; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Harman reports on his meeting with Herter. The leaders of the Conference of Presidents had left Herter's room just before Harman's meeting. They had been seeing him on the same matter, and a report on this has been dispatched by the embassy separately.[1]

Harman repeated Israel's arguments and added that the revival of the Palestine Conciliation Commission would make the Arabs still more intransigent and would whet their appetites. No one can dictate to a sovereign state whom to admit and whom not to admit within its boundaries. Any issue connected with Israel should be resolved through negotiations. Israel is prepared to accept the good offices of the Commission, but any other initiative on its part would be regarded as emanating from the Arabs in an attempt to undermine Israel's sovereignty.

Herter replied that there must be some movement forward, otherwise Congress would not approve any budget for the refugees. He does not understand Israel's fears regarding the Commission, because it would be required only to make another effort "and this could only mean good offices and could not be anything else". He has spoken bluntly to the Arabs and told them that no progress means no money. They have agreed to the preliminary steps, but insisted on citing the 1948 resolution. His impression is that there has been some change in their attitude. He added that the composition of the Commission is favourable to Israel. The 1948 resolution is on the record and Israel cannot ignore it. The Department of State has no leeway; whatever they do is dictated by Congress, and the Department has no animosity whatever towards Israel.

Harman replied that it is clear to him what interpretation the Arabs will give to the resolution. Israel's understanding of the Arab mentality has always been vindicated. He asked whether the American representative's speech during the voting would give any indication that the Commission's mandate would include only good offices. The secretary evaded the question and said that it would be best to allow matters relating to the Palestine Conciliation Commission to develop quietly in the spirit of what he had said before.[3]

Notes

1. A telegram from the embassy to the M.F.A. (TNW953, 7 December 1959, 130.09/2314/9) reported that a delegation from the Conference of Presidents had met with

Secretary Herter and raised the issue of the refugees, among other topics. Herter justified the American stance and said that the time had come to make progress on the matter and also to justify their policy to Congress. He added that he did not understand why Israel was so concerned, in light of the composition of the Palestine Conciliation Commission and of the American intention that the commission act only as a mediator.

2. See No. 146.
3. A last attempt to alter the American position was made in a meeting between Ben-Gurion and U.S. Ambassador Reid on 6 December 1959. No report on this meeting has been found in M.F.A. files; U.S. documents mention it only in a footnote, according to which the prime minister did not seem to be happy with, but neither was he worried by, the resolution, and said, that he would "wait and see." (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 109, p. 241.)

151. Appendix A: United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1315(XIII) of 12 December 1958 on the Arab Refugees

152. Appendix B: United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1456(XIV) of 9 December 1959 on the Arab Refugees

153. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 20 January 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 539; Outg.: 130.16/2956/10

Tekoah gives a preliminary summary of the Urrutia mission.[1]

For years Israel has not raised the issues involved in the Mt. Scopus agreement.[2] It has continued to demand the implementation of Article VIII,[3] but in view of its non-implementation, has been interested in maintaining the status quo and the existing arrangements. Since the Jordanians have recently raised issues concerning Mt. Scopus and have even created a crisis,[4] it is Israel's aim in negotiations to prevent further restrictions, to strengthen its position there, and to solve some specific problems that had given it some concern. Two specific issues were discussed: inspection by the United Nations and the convoys.

As regards inspection, the arrangement reached on 4 December 1957[5] has

been confirmed, according to which U.N. inspection will be postponed until after the full implementation of the 1948 agreement. It is obvious that such an agreement will not be easily implemented because there are still many problems for which solutions will be difficult to find. Thus, the immediate danger of full U.N. inspection of the area has been put off, and the issue of the free movement of the U.N. truce observers has also been deferred. Free movement relates to the investigation of complaints by the truce observers, but they will be able to do this only after "full implementation" has been achieved and with the objective of ensuring it. All that is left, therefore, are visits by the secretary-general's envoys who are required to report to him directly. What emerges from Urrutia's interpretation of these visits is that they apply not to local U.N. truce observers, but rather to political personalities, preferably of senior status, who do not tend to examine matters from a military standpoint.

Regarding the convoys, it was agreed that the U.N. alone is responsible for convoy arrangements. The Jordanian involvement is restricted to providing the convoys with safe passage through its territory. There has been a change for the better in the definition of items permitted or forbidden to be taken up to the mount. From now on, only those items specifically forbidden would not be taken up and all the others would be allowed. As for permitted items, quantities are to be based on the average during the past three years, but this does not rule out greater quantities or even categories of items that have not been take up in the past. Agreement has been reached on the unlimited provision of water and the bringing down of books and other collections of cultural materials.

In discussion of this report with foreign representatives, it should be described as being equitable, though somewhat disappointing, for instance that no progress has been made on opening the Hadassah hospital and that implementation of Article VIII has not been put into effect. On the other hand, the matter of the convoys and U.N. inspection have been arranged. Our talks with Urrutia strengthened the understandings arising of the discussions with the secretary-general and it is therefore essential not to take any hasty measures such as stirring up heated discussions at the Security Council.[10]

Notes

1. The Colombian diplomat Francisco Urrutia visited Jordan and Israel in December 1957-January 1958 as Hammarskjöld's special emissary for Mt. Scopus affairs.
2. The Mt. Scopus agreement, signed on 7 July 1948, stipulated that Mt. Scopus would be transferred to U.N. protection until the end of hostilities or the signing of a new accord on the subject. The hill was divided into two sectors, Arab and Jewish, where

civilian police forces were stationed, under a commander from the United Nations. For the text of the agreement, as well as the appendices that regulated the cease-fire and movement of supply convoys—these were signed on 13 November 1948—see Vol. 2, Appendix E, pp. 629-32.

3. Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement, signed on 3 April 1949, dealt with the establishment of a bilateral committee to determine agreed-on plans and arrangements for whatever matters the parties might submit to it, such as free movement of traffic on vital roads, the resumption of the normal functioning of the cultural and humanitarian institutions on Mt. Scopus and free access to them, free access to the Holy Places and use of the cemetery on the Mount of Olives, resumption of operation of the pumping station at Latrun, the provision of electricity to the Old City of Jerusalem, and the resumption of operation of the railroad to Jerusalem.
4. On 20 November 1957, when the regular biweekly convoy to Mt. Scopus reached the Mandelbaum Gate, the Jordanians demanded that the gasoline included in the cargo not be delivered to the enclave. The gasoline was intended for running the generator that powered the lighting system on Mt. Scopus and for baking bread; the Jordanians claimed, however, that that Israelis were using the gasoline to power machinery being used to construct fortifications. When the Jordanians refused to yield, the convoy did not continue on its way. Israel protested and asked the United Nations to settle the dispute. (See Tekoah to Israel Missions Abroad, circular telegram 377, 21 November 1957, 130.16/2956/14.)
5. In talks conducted by the secretary-general in the region in early December with Ben-Gurion and King Hussein, the two sides agreed to accept the U.N. ruling that gasoline could be transported in a quantity to be determined by the U.N. The latter ruled that 5-6 barrels should be sufficient, instead of 10-11, if the lights on Mt. Scopus were extinguished at 8 P.M. instead of between 1 and 2 A.M. Israel stated that the cutback would have a negative impact on the living conditions of its personnel in the enclave; hence it would be necessary to keep the lights on as before, using electricity generated from some other fuel. Israel requested that it be allowed to bring a Diesel engine to the site and run it on the Diesel fuel already being transported there. Hammarskjöld proposed that the U.N. representative responsible for the enclave deal further with the matter after tensions had eased. (See Tekoah to several missions, 5 December 1957, 130.16/2956/14.)
6. An Arab village in the Israeli sector of Mt. Scopus, under de facto Jordanian control.
7. A hospital in the Jordanian sector of Mt. Scopus. Starting on 1 May 1950 the Jordanians ran the hospital themselves, with assistance from UNRWA, as part of their efforts to turn the demilitarized zone into full-fledged Jordanian territory. Because the hospital was a humanitarian institution, Israel found it difficult to oppose its operation, even though Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus remained closed.
8. These two letters are in File 130.16/2956/14.
9. In the event, Urrutia incorporated the issues of the operating room and the Diesel engine in another letter, dated 19 January 1958 (the letter is in File 130.16/2956/15).
10. For Urrutia's report, see No. 181, Appendix A.

154. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister.[1] 16 March 1958

Copy: 130.16/2956/15

Tekoah reports on the main aspects of the arrangement reached with Urrutia.

Hammarskjöld and other U.N. officials, are disappointed with the arrangement. They alluded to this in their conversations with Kidron. In their opinion it favours the Israeli side. Hammarskjöld even considered annulling the agreement and opening new negotiations. During the first ten days after the arrangement was reached, Hammarskjöld and his aides stated that they were endeavouring to counter some of the obstacles raised by the Jordanians regarding the bringing down of books from Mt. Scopus. When this failed, they suddenly demanded that Israel agree to the appointment of a special representative from among the U.N. truce observers in Jerusalem to supervise the arrangement. Israel objected, understanding that Hammarskjöld was trying to introduce through the back door the idea of U.N. control of Mt. Scopus. Israel stated that it agreed only to visits by a senior political personality, such as Bunche or Urrutia. There was also controversy concerning the authority of such a representative. Hammarskjöld wished to grant him wide powers and to enable him to deal with fundamental legal and political issues. Israel objected to this proposal and suggested not deviating from the authority as set out in the Urrutia report. Finally, Israel proposed that Urrutia pay a further visit to Israel without any official definition of his role.

At the beginning of March, Hammarskjöld and Urrutia exchanged letters with the prime minister.[5] Hammarskjöld complained that due to disagreement over the powers of the representative, it would not be possible to implement the other clauses of the agreement. He added that he planned to visit Jerusalem in the near future and wished to meet with the prime minister. In his reply, the prime minister expressed his willingness to meet, but complained about the refutation of the entire agreement because of disagreement over a single clause.

The conclusion drawn from these events is that Hammarskjöld does not consider the crux of the Mt. Scopus issue to be Israel–Jordan relations, or the prevention of crises between them, but rather U.N. authority and supervision over Mt. Scopus. Since the publication of the report, the secretary-general has tried by all the means at his disposal to force U.N. supervision of Mt. Scopus on Israel and did not even flinch at raising unfounded interpretations of the stipulations of the agreement. When faced

with Israeli objections, he adopted a tactic that prevented Israel from benefiting from the arrangement. During the forthcoming visit of Urrutia,[6] Israel must insist on the implementation of the agreement–and if this is not forthcoming, it should once again adopt a stance based on maintenance of the status quo and strongly demand the implementation of Article VIII.

Notes

1. This summary was prepared at Ben-Gurion's request in advance of the government meeting. For Urrutia's disposition of matters, see No. 153 and notes there.
2. This letter was published as an appendix to Urrutia's report; see No. 181, (Appendix A).
3. No details about this conversation have been found.
4. See Tekoah to Kidron, TNW119, 10 March 1958, 130.09/2339/26.
5. The letters are in File 130.16/2956/15.
6. See No. 156.

155. Editorial Note

Incidents along the Israel-Syria Border

On 30 March–1 April, several shooting incidents took place in the central sector of the Israel-Syria armistice line. They began after the Syrians attempted to prevent the excavation of a drainage canal in Israeli territory. Artillery and tanks were brought to play during the incidents. Casualties on the Israeli side were one killed and three wounded.

With the consent of both parties, the United Nations surveyed the precise location of the canal and found that it was outside the demilitarized zone, except for a 75-metre segment that penetrated no more than five metres into an area that the U.N. surveyors concluded was in joint Arab-Jewish ownership. Israel agreed, without accepting the U.N. conclusions, to shift this segment several metres. The excavation of the canal was completed on 8 April 1958 with no further incident.

156. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 16 April 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 731; Outg.: 130.16/2956/15

Tekoah reports on Urrutia's visit. He arrived on 31 March and left on 14 April. Following upon Urrutia's talks, the U.N. secretary-general has announced that he, together with Bunche, will be "the special emissary". Urrutia has visited Mt. Scopus in the capacity of a special emissary. He reported that he has found everything in order and expressed his satisfaction with the visit. In the meantime a diesel-powered generator has been sent up to the mount making it possible to bring down the gasoline-powered generator.[1] In any case, this will not cause a reduction in the total quantity of fuel taken up to Mt. Scopus. Medical supplies have been taken up and the first shipment of books brought down. During this visit there were no written additions or interpretations to the 18 January agreement,[2] which has remained unchanged. In any event, we pointed out to Urrutia that the 18 January agreement is temporary and its execution will prepare the ground for the implementation of Article VIII.

Notes

1. Pursuant to Israel's request, on which Urrutia gave a favourable recommendation during his first visit; see No. 153 and n. 5 there.
2. See No. 181 (Appendix A).

157. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 12 May 1958

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2378/8

Bunche[1] has come for general discussions, not related to the crisis over the Mt. Scopus convoys.[2] He stresses that he has not come as a special emissary concerning Mt. Scopus, nor is he authorised to deal with the matter officially. However, he does want to discuss certain matters in his official capacity. He will be received by the prime minister[3] and dine with the director-general.[4]

Notes

1. On 9 April 1958, Hammarskjöld named Bunche his emissary for Mt. Scopus affairs, in addition to Urrutia. See No. 156.
2. On 7 May 1958, the Jordanians objected, "on security grounds," to the inclusion of two Israeli civilians, A. Cohen and A. Levy, in the convoy that was to travel to Mt. Scopus that day. Israel decided to postpone the convoy after the U.N. ruled in favour of the Jordanians. Two days later the convoy did make the journey, after the Jordanians withdrew their objections.
3. In their conversation, the prime minister emphasized the Jordanian obligation to implement Article VIII, noting that it was Bunche himself who had drafted that section of the armistice agreement. (See Tekoah to Israel Missions Abroad, 13 May 1958, 130.09/2339/26.)
4. Over dinner with Eytan, Bunche remarked, that he was afraid that the transfer of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry to Baghdad (in the wake of the union between Jordan and Iraq) would make the U.N.'s task more difficult, because contacts would probably be restricted to the Jordanian representatives on the Mixed Armistice Commission (see ibid.).

158. Editorial Note

A Serious Incident on Mt. Scopus on 26 May 1958

On 26 May 1958, the most serious incident since the demilitarization of the area took place. In the early afternoon that day, Jordanian soldiers opened fire on a routine Israeli police patrol in Shlomit Garden,[1] in the Israel sector of Mt. Scopus. Two policemen were injured. The other officers returned fire and then retreated. One of the wounded, who could not be evacuated because of the Jordanian fire, was left behind, along with the commander of the patrol, who was later killed by Jordanian fire. Police reinforcements who tried to evacuate the wounded man were also attacked and two of them were killed. The initial Jordanian fire came from a copse in Jordanian territory beyond the Demilitarized Zone, but the reinforcements were attacked both from the copse and by machine-gun fire from the vicinity of Augusta Victoria Hospital. U.N. observers called for a cease-fire as of 3:30 P.M. and made arrangements to transfer the wounded to hospital. At the agreed-upon hour an Israeli policeman, accompanied by Col. Flint, set out for the place where the wounded were lying. The policeman was wounded by Jordanian fire when he tried to evacuate one of the injured men. Col. Flint, who tried to help, also came under Jordanian fire even though he had come from the Jordanian side and his identity was clearly known to the assailants. Flint was wounded by the Jordanian fire and killed. Other U.N. officers who

endeavored to come to the aid of the wounded men came under sniper fire. The Jordanians continued to snipe at every policeman or U.N. person who tried to reach the wounded. This went on until dark, when Israeli policemen and U.N. observers finally managed to reach the wounded men and discovered the bodies of Col. Flint and two dead policemen, along with two wounded policemen. Another search found the other two dead policemen. (Based on the communiqué issued by the I.D.F. spokesman, as reported in *Ha'aretz*, 27 May 1958)

Note

1. Shlomit Garden was part of the botanical gardens on the Mt. Scopus campus of the Hebrew University. Ownership of the tract was disputed by Israel and Jordan, with each side asserting that it lay within its territory.

159. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister. 12 June 1958

Copy: 130.16/2956/12

Tekoah's reply to the prime minister's letter of 10 June 1958,[1] requesting details of the implementation of the Mt. Scopus agreement.

Tekoah's reply to the first question, as to whether the agreement is being implemented according to the agreed conditions, is given under four headings.

(1) The convoys–The agreement transferred sole responsibility for the convoys to the U.N. This arrangement facilitates things for Israel, especially concerning sending certain items up to the mount and bringing down special collections and books. A serious drawback has been created by the U.N. practice of supplying the Jordanians with lists of the items and personnel going up in the convoy. This is not required by the agreement. In one case, the Jordanians demanded that two names be struck off the list,[3] and as a result Israel requested the U.N. representative to cease this practice.

(2) U.N. supervision–The agreement with Urrutia confirmed the formula agreed upon with Hammarskjöld on 4 December 1957 by which inspection on Mt. Scopus could be carried out.[4] The secretary-general tried to introduce regular inspections by means of his permanent representatives in the area. When Israel objected, the secretary-general agreed to visits only by prominent political envoys sent from New York. In addition, Israel agreed to a first visit by General Von Horn, in his capacity as head of the U.N.

truce observers, and agreed to the investigation of violent incidents such as that which occurred on 26 May.[5] There is no doubt that the U.N. does not intend to make do with these restricted visits but wishes to tighten its supervision over Mt. Scopus.

(3) Fortifications—The Urrutia arrangement acknowledges the existence of fortifications on Mt. Scopus and states that they will be removed after the full implementation of the agreement. The U.N. has not troubled Israel about this matter, but the possibility exists that it will demand the removal of the fortifications even prior to the full implementation of the agreement.

(4) Basic problems—These include Jordanian violations in Issawiya and at Augusta Victoria Hospital,[6] which the Jordanians treat as if they are in their own territory, without any restrictions. There has been no progress on this issue. Israel has rejected the U.N. request to grant official sanction to the Jordanian claim.

The second question concerns the steps taken by the U.N. to implement the agreement. Tekoah notes that over the years, the U.N. has resigned itself to the violations on the Jordanian side of the mount, while concentrated on strengthening its position on the Israeli side. The U.N. has not prevented the presence of Jordanian soldiers in the village of Issawiya and at Augusta Victoria, nor has it prevented attempts by the villagers to expand into Israeli territory.

The third question is to what extent has Jordan implemented the Mt. Scopus agreement. Tekoah points out that it is Jordanian policy to ignore completely the agreement's stipulations and to undermine Israel's status on Mt. Scopus. Jordan has succeeded in attaining its purpose and its status on the Jordanian section of Mt. Scopus now differs in no way from that in any Jordanian territory.

The fourth question is what Israel would be required to do in order to implement the agreement. Tekoah explains that full implementation of the agreement would require Israel to destroy its fortifications and allow full supervision and unhindered movement of the U.N. truce observers on Mt. Scopus.

Summing up, Tekoah stresses that it is essential that Israel take care not to create a situation that could be interpreted as implementation of the agreement, by neither carrying out the original stipulations of the agreement, nor by producing new and mutually accepted solutions to the basic issues dealt with in the agreement. The lesson of the past decade is that the best possible situation for Israel, until the full implementation of Article VIII, is based on the Urrutia agreement regarding the convoys, which reduces U.N. supervision and Jordanian involvement, but at the same time Israel should refrain from seeking solutions to the basic issues relating to Mt. Scopus.

Notes

1. In this letter Tekoah was requested to respond to the prime minister's questions; namely: (1) Was the Mt. Scopus agreement being implemented according to Urrutia's arrangements? (2) What steps had been taken to date by the U.N. to implement the agreement? (3) What had the Jordanians done to implement the agreement? (4) What was required of Israel on this count?
2. At Ben-Gurion's instructions, on 16 May 1958, Tekoah sent a letter to Von Horn, in which he wrote that in a number of cases unnecessary disputes had arisen between Israel and Jordan, as well as misunderstandings with U.N. personnel, as a result of Flint's initiatives and positions. For this reason, Israeli representatives had been instructed that in the future they were to make direct contact with the U.N. staff on every matter that Flint had been handling. Israel did not publicize this step. (See Tekoah to the Israel Permanent Mission at the U.N., 16 May 1958, 130.09/2339/26.) Flint was killed several days later; see Editorial Note 158.
3. See No. 157 and n. 2 there.
4. See No. 154.
5. See No. 158 (Editorial Note).
6. See No. 153 and nn. 6 and 7 there.

160. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 16 June 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 894; Outg.: 130.16/2956/12

Cordier has paid a visit to the prime minister.[1] He began by stating that he wishes to improve the situation on Mt. Scopus. The U.N. is concerned about the limitation of the truce observers' freedom of movement on the mount and about the restrictions placed on traffic to Issawiya.[3] The prime minister agreed that there is a problem connected with Mt. Scopus and the implementation of the agreements relating to it, but the focal point is the armistice agreement, and especially implementation of all the aspects of Article VIII, including free access to the university and the Hadassah Hospital, the Western Wall, the cemetery on the Mount of Olives, etc. Cordier replied that implementation of this article raised many problems, including the issue of cooperation between Israel and the Mixed Armistice Commission and Jordan's counter-demand for the implementation of Article VI.[4] He also pointed out that the U.N. is unable to impose a solution on the parties and the most it can do is to pass on complaints to the other side. The prime minister stated that Israel wants the agreement to be implemented in full and that Jordan is free to raise its contentions. Toward the end of the conversation, Ben-Gurion raised the issue of the U.N.

insistence of entering Shlomit Garden from the Arab side, and there was an exchange of views on this matter. Finally, Ben-Gurion asked why the U.N. relates to the Mt. Scopus agreement only from the point of view of its own authority, when what is most important is to attain peace. It is what Jordan is doing that is important, not the actions of the truce observers. Cordier replied that the U.N.'s authority derives from the agreement and that safeguarding this authority would guarantee the rights of both sides. A further meeting was arranged.[7]

Notes

1. Cordier was dispatched to the region by Hammarskjöld in the wake of the grave incident on Mt. Scopus on 26 May 1958–see No. 158 (Editorial Note).
2. In a conversation with Eytan–see Tekoah to the Israel Missions Abroad, TNW451, 16 June 1958, 130.16/2956/12.
3. Of the three roads that provided access to Issawiya, two did not pass through the Israeli sector on Mt. Scopus. One of them, however, was some four kilometres longer than the road through the Israeli sector; the other was longer still. Pedestrians could reach the village by many paths at some distance from the Israeli sector. After the incident on 26 May, Israel closed off the road through its sector; on 29 June, however, it agreed to open it twice a day. Before Urrutia left he was told that Israel would agree to open the road, in daylight hours only, starting on 29 June 1958. (See Tekoah's telegrams to the Israel Missions Abroad, 1 June and 20 June 1958, 130.09/2339/27.)
4. This article dealt with the transfer to Jordanian responsibility of the sector held by the Iraqi expeditionary force. Parts of the area were transferred to Israeli control; in return, Jordan was to receive territory near the Dead Sea. Israel undertook to pay Jordan compensation to cover the cost of constructing a new road between Tulkarm and Qalqilya, to replace the old road that was transferred to Israeli control. The article also referred to the rights of the villagers who might be adversely affect by the changes to the line of demarcation between Israel and Jordan. (See Vol. 3, Appendix H, pp. 714-16.)
5. This stipulates that "the establishment of an armistice between the armed forces of the two Parties is accepted as an indispensable step toward the liquidation of armed conflict and the restoration of peace in Palestine" (ibid., pp. 712-13).
6. See No. 158 and n. 8 there.
7. See No. 161.

161. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 18 June 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 899; Outg.: 130.16/2956/12

At a second meeting, which took place on 18 June, Cordier reported that he had presented Rifa'i with Israel's complaints regarding the implementation of Article VIII and its desire to negotiate the implementation of all clauses of the armistice agreement. Rifa'i had replied that the matter of Article VIII was now before the Security Council, brought up Article VI, and added that at some time it would be possible to negotiate the entire Palestine issue with Israel. The prime minister pressured Cordier to express his position regarding the implementation of Article VIII, and reminded him of Israel's demand to convene the special conference under Article XII.[3] Cordier avoided the issue, stating that the U.N. supported the implementation of the entire armistice agreement, including the desire to attain peace. Progress also depended on the general atmosphere which should be improved. Since Israel had greater abilities than the Arab countries, more was expected of it. Toward the end of the conversation, the issue of access to Issawiya was raised once again, with Cordier speaking with great emotion about the difficulties caused by the closure. Ben-Gurion expressed understanding of the situation, but added that he was surprised that Cordier had not exhibited the same emotion regarding restrictions on the movement of Israelis, including access to the Western Wall. Cordier refused to leave the matter and commented that there would be no other choice but to bring the issue before the Security Council. The prime minister replied that when Jordan agreed to meet for negotiations on implementation of the armistice agreement, Israel would also be prepared to examine the question of access to Issawiya. At the end of the meeting Cordier asked for a further meeting on 19 June.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 163.
2. An independent evening newspaper published in Stockholm.
3. Paragraph three of this article stipulates that one year after the signing of the armistice agreement, "either of the Parties may call upon the secretary-general of the United Nations to convoke a conference of representatives of the two Parties for the purpose of reviewing, revising, or suspending any of the provisions of the Agreement other than Articles I and III." (See Vol. 3, Appendix H, p. 720.)
4. For a report on the meeting, see Tekoah's telegram to Israel Missions Abroad, Ministry Bulletin 900, 19 June 1958, 130.09/2339/27. The issue of the road to

Issawiya was brought up again, along with Cordier's proposal to avoid incidents in "disputed areas" as a result of disagreements about maps. The road to Issawiya came up in another meeting between Eytan and Cordier on 20 June. (See M.F.A. to the Israel Missions Abroad, Ministry Bulletin 905, 20 June 1958, ibid.)

162. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 20 June 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 909; Outg.: 130.09/2339/27

Tekoah reports on a number of reservations to the Von Horn report on the incident that took place on Mt. Scopus on 26 May 1958.[1]

In presenting of the facts, Von Horn avoids clearly placing the blame on Jordan for opening fire and disregards the Jordanian refusal to guarantee not to open fire on the truce observers sent to examine the incident.

In the political section, the report ignores Article VIII and breaches of the 1948 agreement by the Jordanians. The illegal situation in Issawiya and Augusta Victoria is not mentioned at all.

The conclusions of the report: It proposes the continuation of the 1954 status quo, while distorting its content. The agreement with Burns in September 1954 referred to maintaining the status quo, but what can be inferred from the present report is a suggestion to sanction the Jordanian attempt and those of the Arab residents of Issawiya to expand into Israeli territory as near as 50 metres to the university and Hadassah buildings, and to impose restrictions on Israeli movement in the area. Von Horn report adds a new term to the status quo–disputed areas–arising from the difference between the two maps, the one accepted by Israel and the other it has always rejected. The practical result is a reduction of Israeli controlled territory on Mt. Scopus.

Notes

1. The report was published as U.N. Document S/4030, 17 June 1958.
2. See Tekoah to Von Horn, 1 June 1958, 130.16/2956/12.
3. This document is in File 130.16/2948/19. For the affair of the maps, see No. 184, Appendix D.

163. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 22 June 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 916; Outg.: 130.16/2956/12

Tekoah reports on a meeting between the prime minister and the U.N. secretary-general dealing with the Mt. Scopus conflict and Israel's demands of Jordan.

The discussion opened with the issue of Israeli patrols on Mt. Scopus, the U.N. contention that Israel was entering areas not under its jurisdiction, and the U.N. demand to open the road to Issawiya.[2] The prime minister replied that Israel has complaints about other roads that are closed to it, those to the Western Wall, to the University and to the cemetery on Mount of Olives, i.e., the non-implementation of Article VIII. To that end, Israel requests the convening of a conference in pursuance of Article XII.[3]

The secretary-general replied that he was noting the request, but that he had to point out that this is a difficult requirement. He considers the solution of the Issawiya road issue to be a jumping off point for negotiations on more complex issues. It is not clear to him which clauses in the Israel–Jordan armistice agreement Israel wishes to revise under Article XII. Furthermore, in view of the situation in Lebanon, he does not believe that there will be a positive reaction to the Israeli demand. Since Israel's main interest is the implementation of Article VIII, he proposes that Israel return to full participation in the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, which would simultaneously create a sub-committee to deal with the Mt. Scopus issue. This sub-committee would be recognized by Jordan as a special committee in compliance with Article VIII to deal with current matters regarding Mt. Scopus and with reaching an agreement for the full implementation of Article VIII. In the opinion of the secretary-general this would enable Jordan to consider the renewal of the special committee as a natural way in which to revive the plenary armistice commission. The prime minister agreed to this proposal. The secretary-general's proposal closes a circle—it fulfills the Israeli demand that its return to the Armistice Commission be in exchange for Jordanian agreement to resume negotiations on the implementation of Article VIII.

Regarding the road to Issawiya, the prime minister suggested that Israeli representatives should visit the village, examine the situation, and reach a solution together with the U.N. The secretary-general agreed.

The remainder of the meeting dealt with the Von Horn report on the 26 May incident.[5] The prime minister reiterated Israel's reservations concerning the report. Cordier, who was also present, replied that the U.N. is

invested with supervisory authority on the mount, authority which had been undermined over the years. The discussion on this issue ended without reaching any solution.

Notes

1. See No. 162 and n. 3 there.
2. See No. 160 and n. 3 there. Hammarskjöld and Ben-Gurion exchanged letters on the issue, but did not reach any conclusion; the former insisted on the reopening of the road to Issawiya, day and night, whereas Ben-Gurion held out for implementation of Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement. (The correspondence, dated June 1958, is in File 130.16/2956/12 and the Ben-Gurion Archives.)
3. See No. 161 and n. 3 there.
4. Israel withdrew from the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission after its chairman refused, on 1 October 1956, to recognize Jordanian responsibility for an incident on 23 September of that year, when Arab Legion outposts opened fire on the participants at a conference of the Israel Exploration Society at Kibbutz Ramat Rahel, on the southern outskirts of Jerusalem, killing four of them. Israel returned to the commission in March 1959.
5. See No. 162.

164. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 4 December 1958

Coded Tel. TNW847; Outg.: 130.09/2339/28

Eytan instructs Eban to file a complaint immediately with the Security Council regarding the Syrian shelling on the previous day,[1] and to demand an immediate meeting. The decision to bring the matter to the Security Council was taken at a special government meeting that day.

Note

1. On 3 December the Syrians opened fire on shepherds and flocks from Kibbutz Gonen and on the forces that arrived to extricate them. The incident escalated into shelling of several settlements. For additional details see the Note from Israel to the president of the Security Council, No. 182 (Appendix B).

165. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 16 December 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 394; Outg.: 130.09/2378/8

Israel is disappointed at the conclusion reached by the Security Council,[1] which is meaningless.[2] It believes that the majority was deterred by the expected Soviet veto, but not only for that reason. The Council does not have the courage to take a clear cut stand, certainly not to censure. The Egyptians already see this as a victory, and are liable to consider it carte blanche–perhaps even authorisation for their belligerency. He hopes that the secretary-general will be mindful of the responsibility he has taken upon himself by his statement and in view of the sentiments expressed by the speakers.

Notes

1. For the debate of Israel's complaint over the incident on 3 December, see No. 164.
2. The Security Council did not pass a resolution in the wake of the Israeli complaint and made do with a statement by its president, Swedish permanent representative Gunnar Jarring, that it fully recognized the gravity of the action that Israel complained of. This lukewarm summary was due to fears that the Soviet Union would veto a strong resolution and to Hammarskjöld's announcement that he intended to pay a visit to the region and take up the matter with the relevant countries. (See Tekoah to Eytan and Comay, NWT140, 20 December 1958, 130.09/2339/10.)

166. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 4 January 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 445; Outg.: 130.16/2960/5

At a meeting at Sde Boker between Hammarskjöld and Ben-Gurion, the prime minister raised the issue of Article VIII of the Israel–Jordan Armistice Agreement and stressed that Israel insists on the implementation of the directives in that article. The secretary-general replied that while he is aware that in principle Article VIII has been agreed to, its practical implementation is the responsibility of the Mixed Armistice Commission, to which the U.N. is not a party.[1] As for Mt. Scopus, Jordan is fearful of Israel's entrenchment on the mount and as a result, its domination of the Old City

of Jerusalem. He reiterated his proposal to establish a sub-committee of the armistice commission, and that he would strive to achieve this in Jordan.[2] He stressed that the U.N.'s power is limited. He personally considers his task purely diplomatic, comparing it to the continuous impact of a drop of water on a rock, which in the course of time succeeds in causing it to crumble.

On purpose, little time was left for discussion of events in the north. The secretary-general requested that steps be taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and suggested demarcation of the border, strengthening the authority of the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission, and apprising the U.N. of Israel's intentions to carry out work in this area. At the end of the discussion, Israel agreed to the demarcation of the international border, stressing that the reference was the international border. Other issues were not brought up, even though in a private discussion the secretary-general talked about the refugees and the right of free choice to return to their former places of residence.

Biran sums up, saying that they will wait for a reply from Jordan regarding Article VIII and a reply from the United Arab Republic regarding the demarcation of the international border. The main importance of the visit is in Biran's opinion that the secretary-general has been confronted with realities in Israel and has discovered the facts on the ground, which refute his former conceptions.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 153, n. 3.
2. See No. 163.
3. See No. 161 and n. 3 there.
4. This article deals with the working procedures of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission. See Vol. 3, Appendix H, pp. 718-19.
5. According to the armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt, the Auja (Nitzana) area was demilitarized. Israel later gained control of the sector.
6. A detailed summary of the visit, on 12 January 1959, drawn up by Biran, is in the Ben-Gurion Archives.
7. Hammarskjöld did not come in May and sent Bunche instead; see No. 179.

167. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 14 January 1959

Coded Tel. TNW956; Outg.: 130.09/2339/29

In preparation for the meeting with the secretary-general,[1] it is suggested that the issue of the demilitarized zones and his proposals for the prevention of incidents not be brought up for discussion. In his letters[2] he has already tried to give a different interpretation to certain aspects, since in the discussions at Sde Boker only one single issue was agreed upon—the demarcation of the international border. He can be told that had the border been demarcated, the incident with the shepherd at Kibbutz Shamir could have been avoided.[3] In the discussions here, the secretary-general claimed that the Egyptians were not seeking to provoke incidents. Thus, the incidents in the north and the incursions into Israeli air space[4] should be protested.

Biran summarizes the main points in the secretary-general's letters to the prime minister. The secretary-general writes that in Saudi Arabia he found an intransigent attitude toward Israel. Throughout the entire area, the refugee issue is considered to be the main point of contention. While admitting that he has not attained any real achievements, he sums up his visit as "highly interesting and on the whole encouraging". As regards Article VIII, he writes that he demanded that Jordan agree to the setting up of a sub-committee, and even tried to attain agreement on token passage to the Western Wall. Jordan has rejected his proposals, but stated that it would not object to Israel raising in the Mixed Armistice Commission those clauses about which agreement in principle had been reached in Article VIII. The secretary-general considers this as progress. Biran quotes the secretary-general's conclusions [see the Main Volume, p. 289].

In sum, Biran suggests that these issues not be raised at the meeting and, if the secretary-general should raise them, the Israeli reaction should be the fundamental one laid down by the prime minister: Jordan is required to implement all the clauses of the armistice agreement.

Notes

1. See No. 169.
2. See No. 168. Excerpts from these letters are also presented below.
3. On this incident, and other incidents mentioned below, see the Israeli Note to the Security Council, 27 January 1959, U.N. Document S/4151 (No. 183, Appendix C).
4. In late 1958, Egyptian planes made a number of attempts to penetrate Israeli airspace

and conduct photo reconnaissance missions. After a dogfight on 30 December 1958, an Egyptian plane was observed to crash in Egyptian territory.

168. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 15 January 1959

Coded Tel. TNW963; Outg.: 130.16/2956/2

Biran quotes excerpts from two letters from the secretary-general, one to Ben-Gurion and the other following his visit to Jordan.[1] For the original excerpts–see in the Main Volume, pp. 289–291.

Notes

1. The full text of the letter, which was transmitted by Col. Rickert, is in File 130.16/2956/2.
2. In May 1956, Sharett proposed that Hammarskjöld try to get the Jordanians to allow a yearly visit by a prayer quorum (*Minyan*) of rabbis to the Western Wall, as a way to mark the Jews' unbroken attachment to the site. (See Rafael to the Israel Missions Abroad, Ministry Bulletin 679, 4 May 1956, 130.16/2947/12.)
3. No. 167. For Ben-Gurion's reply to these letters, see No. 173.

169. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 January 1959

Coded Tel. NWT152; Inc.: 130.09/2339/4

The meeting between Eban and the secretary-general lasted for about one hour.[1] Eban referred to the incidents in the south and along the Syrian border,[2] stressing the Israel government's concern. In reply, the secretary-general stated that responsibility also lies with Israel. In the north, Israel refuses to recognise the authority of the chairman of the Israel–Syria Mixed Armistice Commission and maintains a number of settlements there which the Syrians consider to be military outposts. In the south, the truce observers have not discerned any Egyptian infringement of Israeli air space, while 58 cases of Israeli infringement of Egyptian air space were reported between 1 and 8 December alone. He considered that the incidents in the south constituted "a messy way of quid pro quo" on the part of the

Egyptians who wished to be seen as supporting Syria in its difficulties with Israel.

The secretary-general then moved on to his proposal for demarcation of the Syrian border and the prior announcement of development works along the border.[3] He reported that Nasser has agreed to both proposals,[4] and expressed concern that U.N. headquarters in Jerusalem have not yet received Israel's reaction to them.

He spoke of his attempts to persuade the Jordanians regarding Article VIII. He stated that this has met with firm resistance. Their present stance, as he reported it in his letter to the prime minister,[5] seemes to be the maximum that could be achieved. The ambassador stated that the prime minister will reply to the secretary-general on this matter.

The secretary-general concluded with his general impressions of the situation in the region following upon his visit to the area. The main issue that concerns the Arabs at present is the struggle against Communism. The Israeli issue is of less concern, although all Arab leaders are troubled by the refugee issue. On this matter, agreement was reached in the discussions with the prime minister that UNRWA aid would continue, since no political solution seemed imminent.

The secretary-general requested that the discussion be continued after he receives the prime minister's reply.

Notes

1. The purpose of the meeting was to hear Hammarskjöld's impressions from his tour of the U.A.R., Jordan, and Israel in December 1958-January 1959.
2. See No. 167 and notes there.
3. See No. 166.
4. Similar information was confided to Israel in a letter from Von Horn to Biran, dated 8 January 1959 (130.16/2960/5).
5. See No. 168.
6. Paragraph 8 of Article XI of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement stipulated that "where interpretation of the meaning of a particular provision of this agreement, other than the Preamble and Articles I and II, is at issue, the Commission's interpretation shall prevail" (see Vol. 3, Appendix H, p. 719).

170. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 25 January 1959

Coded Tel. TNW977; Outg.: 130.09/2312/11

Comay instructs the Israel mission to the United Nations to submit a complaint to the Security Council regarding the murder of the shepherd, and the recent occurrence of incidents and gunfire.[1] This step is to be taken in keeping with the government's decision.

Note

1. See No. 183 (Appendix C).

171. A. Eban [New York] to Ch. Herter (Washington). 29 January 1959

Notes

1. See No. 170 and No. 183 (Appendix C).
2. The wife of the air attaché at the British embassy in Israel was murdered near the Israeli-Syrian border, not far from Tiberias, in November 1958, evidently by infiltrators from Syria.
3. The reference is to a Jordanian complaint submitted to the Security Council in November 1957 concerning trees that Israel had planted in the no man's land near the U.N. headquarters. A resolution calling for a halt to the work, sponsored by the United States and Great Britain, was adopted on 20 January 1958.
4. The United States let Israel down, however. In the Security Council debate on 31 January 1959, the U.S. ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge, said that strict instructions against opening fire, except in clear cases of self-defence, should be given to the commanders on both sides. He added that the United States was of the opinion that appropriate reliance on the U.N. mechanisms in the region would make it possible to resolve most problems on site. Other delegates spoke in a similar vein and the Council wound up its deliberations without passing a resolution.

172. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 February 1959

Coded Tel. NWT182; Inc.: 130.09/2339/11

Tekoah forwards to the prime minister the content of the U.N. secretary-general's letter of 4 February. For the full text see Main Volume, pp. 296–298.

Notes

1. See No. 170 and No. 171, n. 4.
2. See No. 166.
3. On 23 January, *Davar* published an article by Hanna Semer, its correspondent in the United States. She wrote that the U.N. secretary-general had been convinced during his Middle East tour that an attempt to impose a final settlement of the refugee problem would lead to diplomatic complications without contributing to a realistic solution.
4. In a conversation on 27 January 1959. See the report by Tekoah to the M.F.A., NWT157, 27 January 1959, 130.09/2339/11.

173. D. Ben-Gurion [Jerusalem] to D. Hammarskjöld (New York). 10 February 1959

Notes

1. See No. 168.
2. A detailed report on this incident, sent by Gen. Burns, the UNEF commander, is in the IMDEA. In the wake of this report, Ben-Gurion instructed the chief of the general staff to "interrogate the members and commander of the patrol again." He added that he suspected that the earlier reports submitted by the soldiers had not been accurate or true. (See Ben-Gurion to the chief of the general staff, 17 February 1959, IMDEA 230.72/1192.)
3. On 7 February, with Israel absent, the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission decided to censure Israel for the incident on 4 February, on the grounds that the I.D.F. patrol had been inside the Gaza Strip when it opened fire on the Bedouin encampment, killing a woman and a child. Israel was requested to refrain from such actions in the future.
4. These remarks do not appear in the summary of the meeting recorded by Biran on 7 September 1958 (File 130.16/2956/1); they may have been made when he was not in the room.
5. No. 172.
6. See No. 163, n. 4.

174. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 February 1959

Coded Tel. NWT210; Inc.: 130.09/2339/11

Tekoah cables the text of a letter from the U.N. secretary-general to Ben-Gurion, dated 13 February. For the full text see Main Volume (pp. 302–304). Tekoah appends the legal opinion of the U.N. Legal Department (p. 304). Tekoah advises that the meeting with Hammarskjöld has been set for 16 February and requests instructions on how to react to technical aspects of the issues raised by the secretary-general.[7]

Notes

1. See No. 173.
2. See No. 173 and n. 2 there.
3. The matter was discussed at a meeting between Hammarskjöld and Eban and Tekoah on 16 February 1959; see Tekoah to the M.F.A., NWT211, 16 February 1959, 130.09/2339/11.
4. Tekoah cabled the information to the M.F.A. (NWT200, 10 February 1959, 130.16/2959/5).
5. The appendix has not been found; but see Tekoah's summary at the end of the present document.
6. The reference is to the grave incidents on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip on 5 and 6 April 1956. The Egyptians opened fire on Israel patrols in the Kissufim and Mefalsim sectors. In order to extricate the members of one of the patrols Israeli artillery shelled the Egyptian outposts. Later the Egyptians directed mortar fire against Kissufim and Ein Hashelosha. Israel responded by shelling the attacking positions, some of which were located in Gaza and other urban areas. The Egyptians claimed that 43 civilians were killed and 103 injured in the barrage.
7. No reply to this telegram has been found. On the meeting with Hammarskjöld on 16 February, see n. 3 above.

175. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 17 February 1959

Coded Tel. TNW25; Outg.: 130.16/2959/5

Biran is cabling to the minister of foreign afffairs, Eban, and Tekoah, the content of the prime minister's letter to the U.N. secretary-general. For the full text Main Volume, pp. 305–306.

Notes

1. In the reply to Hammarskjöld's letter of 13 February, presented in No. 174. The full text of the letter, dated 16 February, is in the IMDEA, 890.73/1032.
2. According to this article of the Israel-Egypt General Armistice Agreement, the resort to military force to settle the Palestine question was prohibited; neither party would take aggressive action against the other; each party had a right to security and freedom from fear of attack by the other; the armistice was an indispensable step toward the liquidation of armed conflict and restoration of peace in Palestine (see Vol. 3, Appendix F, pp. 688-89).

176. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 February 1959

Coded Tel. NWT214; Inc.: 130.09/2339/11

Tekoah has met with the secretary-general and discussed the prime minister's letter dated the 17th[1] and his message of the 18th.[2] Hammarskjöld had read both communications and commented that he wishes to examine carefully the prime minister's reply to his proposal regarding a survey along the northern border, but in the meantime he wishes to point out that his proposal for a survey is not a substitute for orders not to open fire across the border. A discussion followed about the situation on the northern border. Hammerskjöld reiterated his previous contention that the situation there is complicated, and that the Syrians fear Israel's taking control of certain areas. In a conversation with Bitar, Hammarskjöld was told that Syria has no option but "to make a stand". He claimed that Goldmann too, had told him that at times Israel had acted provocatively. He insisted on the need to carry out the survey and added that Von Horn has informed him that he plans to begin the examination by requesting both sides to submit in writing their interpretation of the situation.

The incidents in Gaza were also discussed, and Hammarskjöld said that they are proof of human frailty in implementing orders.

Notes

1. No. 175.
2. It refers to the incident on 4 February 1959, when an I.D.F. patrol opened fire on a UNEF unit (see No. 173 and n. 2 there), as well as to the incident on 17 February 1959, during which a U.N. force clashed with an I.D.F. unit that had accidentally crossed the line into the Gaza District. A U.N. soldier was wounded in the latter

incident. (The message is in the IMDEA, 890.73/1032; on the second incident, see Biran to the Israel Missions Abroad, 18 January 1959, 130.09/2339/29.)

3. But see No. 177.
4. In this telegram Tekoah stated that reports from Jerusalem had appeared in the press, to the effect that Israel had rejected Hammarskjöld's proposal concerning the Syrian border. Tekoah suggested briefing journalists in the spirit of Ben-Gurion's letter to Hammarskjöld, that is, that a survey would divert attention from the fundamental principle that cross-border fire was impermissible (17 February 1959, 130.09/2339/11.)

177. Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 February 1959

Coded Tel. NWT216; Inc.: 130.09/2339/11

Following the meeting, the secretary-general has informed them that he has dictated a number of comments on the prime minister's letters.[1] (For the full text see Main Volume, pp. 308–309) The minister of foreign affairs, who has read the material,[2] stated that it is desirable that the prime minister react to the matter of what orders have been given to the Israeli forces regarding opening fire.

Notes

1. See No. 176.
2. The foreign minister was then in New York as part of a tour on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal.

178. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 19 February 1959

Coded Tel. TNW35; Outg.: 130.09/2339/29

The proposed survey along the northern border was discussed at the meeting between Von Horn and the prime minister. Von Horn opened by stating that he is aware of the exchange of correspondence between the prime minister and the secretary-general.[2] He knows that orders not to open fire have been given by both Syria and Israel. However, despite these orders,

shooting incidents are still taking place. The prime minister reiterated that strict orders have been given and that anyone disobeying them would be brought to trial. He is of the opinion that political considerations lie behind the shooting from the Syrian side. Von Horn returned to the matter of the survey, adding that if he were able to report back to the members of the Security Council [about the survey] stating that both sides were cooperating, the report would have greater impact. He requested that Israel grant him permission to gather information from people in the area, such as secretaries of settlements and liaison officers, and also requested freedom of movement. When Von Horn said that he understood that, the prime minister agreed to the survey, Ben-Gurion launched into a historical survey of the commissions of inquiry on Palestine since 1936. When Von Horn insisted, the prime minister did not reply specifically in the positive, nor did he express any objection. Biran understood from one of Von Horn's aides that he had concluded from the meeting that the prime minister has no objection to the survey.

Notes

1. The reference is to a report, which appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* on 18 February, that von Horn had said that he had no expectations from a meeting with Ben-Gurion, should one take place.
2. See No. 173.
3. Darbashiya and Dardara.
4. There is a full report on the meeting in IMDEA, 890.73/1037.

179. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to J. Herzog (Washington). 13 June 1959

Copy: 130.16/2956/13

Biran sums up the situation on Mt. Scopus.[1] It is the Jordanians who question the status quo. For almost a year things have been quiet on the mount and Israel is convinced that this have resulted from closing the road to Issawiya at night and from Israeli patrols from time to time in Shlomit Garden. The Jordanians and the U.N. intend to restrict Israel to the area of Hadassah hospital and the university. The Jordanians do not deny Israel's right to patrol, but claim that this "annoys" them. They ignore the fact that Israel had opened the road to Issawiya, during the daytime, after the Flint incident,[2] in order to see if the Jordanians had good intentions to solve the

issue of Article VIII. On the contrary, if they implement Article VIII, much vexation will cease on both sides. Biran does not believe that further concessions will lead to the establishment of normal relations. The very presence of Israel on Mount Scopus annoys the Jordanians. The patrols are essential to prevent encroachment and for the security of the people there. Opening the road at night would endanger that security.

Notes

1. This letter has not been located, but in a detailed survey by Biran, dated 20 July 1959, he summarized the situation on Mt. Scopus. After the incidents, Israel had closed the road to Issawiya that passed through its territory; it reopened it only after appeals by the United Nations–and then only in the daytime. The U.N. had begun to press for its reopening at night, too. Israel refused and maintained that the Jordanian demands with regard to the road were only a pretext for changing the status quo, which had been in effect for ten months. There was also a question about the patrols conducted by Israel policemen on the hill. These were intended to prevent any assaults on Israeli territory and were useful in deterring serious incidents in the future. In sum, Israel was attempting to maintain the status quo, whereas the Jordanians were trying to undermine it. (See the survey, headed "Mt. Scopus," dated 20 July 1959, 130.16/2956/13.)
2. See No. 158 (Editorial Note).

180. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 24 December 1959.

Coded Circular Tel.; Outg.:130.09/2378/2

Biran reports on incidents of gunfire in the Tel Katzir–Tawafiq area,[1] during which Syrian flocks entered the area accompanied by armed persons. During the course of one of the incidents, one Israeli soldier was severely wounded and was left in the field. A cease-fire has been arranged, but the Syrians claim that it apply only to their military forces, and not to the Tawafiq villagers.

Note

1. These incidents, at the beginning of the agricultural season, led to further incidents in the Tel Kazir (Bet Kazir) region. The tensions peaked after an I.D.F. force attacked the Syrian outposts at Khirbet Tawfiq and destroyed them on the night of 31 January/ 1 February 1960. On the incident and its implications, see Vol. 14, Chapter 1.

181. Appendix A. Text of Report from Dr. Francisco Urrutia, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, regarding Mount Scopus. (New York, 18 January 1958)

182. Appendix B. Letter dated 4 December 1958 from the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed to the President of the Security Council

183. Appendix C. Letter dated 26 January 1959 from the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed to the President of the Security Council

184. Appendix D. Memorandum on Mount Scopus (Jerusalem, 25 September 1959)

185. G. Avner (Jerusalem) to R. Shiloah and M. Comay (Jerusalem). 5 January 1958

Copy: 130.23/3087/12

Avner puts into writing some thoughts about the directions of Israel's political action regarding the United States in the near future. These do not relate to current activity arising out of events on the borders[1,2] or to Israel's urgent requests for economic aid.[3] Furthermore, they are not concerned with international issues, such as what steps are to be taken in the Middle East from the point of view of Western interests, since these matters were discussed in the memorandum prepared for the last NATO conference, and which was reported to have been highly commended.[5]

Israel considers it important that the following demands be raised:

1) It is essential to raise once again the demand that the U.S. issue a clear statement to the Soviet Union to the effect that the United States wishes to maintain the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all the

countries in the Middle East. It is essential that this declaration mention Israel specifically. The last NATO conference in Paris and the declaration issued thereafter[7] as well as the likelihood that discussions will be held between the East and West regarding the Middle East, create new conditions for such a statement.

2) Steps should be taken to arrange joint military action in case of attack against Israel, and to obtain a statement that the U.S. is prepared to come to the aid of Israel in keeping with its various declarations. It is possible to base this request on the Eisenhower-Macmillan statement,[9] the NATO declaration of 19 December,[10] the statement by Dulles and Herter to Eban,[11, 12] and Dulles's message to the prime minister.[13] In fact, Dulles has proposed discussions with Israel on this issue and both he and Herter maintained that attempts should be made to reach more practical arrangements rather than formal agreements.

3) Arms and financial aid for the purchase of weapons from the West. Since the possibility that the United States will sell arms to Israel is not great, aid to purchase weapons in countries of the West should be stressed. Of the utmost importance is an announcement in principle by the State Department on this issue, without reference to any specific purchase.

4) Cooperation in the scientific field. Attempts should be made to attain a statement in principle on the part of the U.S. giving permission for cooperation between Israeli and American scientists and institutions.

Notes

1. The Colombian diplomat Francisco Urrutia visited Israel and Jordan in January 1958, as Hammarskjöld's special emissary on Mt. Scopus affairs; see chapter 6.
2. In November 1957, Jordan lodged a complaint with the Security Council about trees that Israel had planted in no man's land near Government House. A resolution calling for a halt to the work, sponsored by the United States and Great Britain, was adopted on 20 January 1958.
3. In 1956, Israel had asked the Export-Import bank for a $75 million loan to develop water resources. A decision on the matter had been deferred for a number of reasons. In early 1958, it approved a $24.2 million loan to Israel for the development of water resources not connected with the Jordan River project (the National Water Carrier). On the affair, see chapter 2.
4. Philip Klutznick, a businessman and honorary president of B'nai B'rith. In 1957, he initiated the construction of public housing in Israel, for which he requested guarantees from the U.S. International Cooperation Administration (I.C.A.).
5. The reference is to an *aide-mémore* sent by Eban to the State Department, dated 17 November 1957 (in File 130.23/3087/12). Eban surveyed the Soviet penetration of the Middle East and suggested that it be restrained by providing security guarantees and

economic assistance to countries in the region. The memorandum was submitted in advance of the meeting of the NATO Council in Paris in December 1957.

6. See Eban to the M.F.A., telegram 158, 30 November 1957, 130.02/2455/6.
7. Paragraph 3 in the communiqué issued by the NATO ministers on 19 December 1957 reads as follows: "We have reviewed the situation in the Middle East. In line with the peaceful aims of our alliance we confirm the support of our governments for the independence and sovereignty of the states in this region, and our interest in the economic well-being of their peoples. We believe that the stability of this important area is vital to world peace." See NATO, Declaration and Communiqué, Ministerial Meeting, 16-19 December 1957, 130.23/3087/12.
8. Dulles had observer status at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Baghdad Pact, held in Ankara in January 1958.
9. Should be "of 25 October 1957". See chapter 13, No. 365, and n. 6 there.
10. Paragraph 1 in the communiqué of the NATO ministers (see above, n. 7) reads as follows: "The aims of the Soviet bloc are to weaken the free world. Its instruments are military, political and economic; and its activities are world-wide. To meet its challenge the free world must organize its resources–moral, military, political and economic–and be ready to deploy them wherever the situation demands. Our alliance cannot therefore be concerned only with the North Atlantic area or only with military defense. It must also organize its political and economic strength on the principle of interdependence, and must take into account developments outside its own area."
11. See Eban to the M.F.A., TNWA463, 1 November 1957, 93.01/2194/2.
12. See Eban to the M.F.A., WIA97, 13 November 1957, 93.01/2215/3.
13. In this communication Dulles stated that the United States had made plain to the Soviet Union its interest in preserving the independence and territorial integrity of all states in the Middle East (in File 130.02/2456/4).
14. In a speech to the American people on 23 December 1957, Dulles said, "The fact is that the peace of any part of the world can be put in jeopardy by what goes on in another part of the world and so it is in the common interest that there should be efforts to create a sense of cohesion and of confident interdependence between the world nations everywhere, and the final declaration to which you alluded, Mr. President, is categoric in this respect. It says, and again I quote, 'To all other peoples who like ourselves are dedicated to freedom and peace, we offer our cooperation on the basis of complete equality and in a spirit of fraternity.' " (See survey by the M.F.A., "Our demands of United States–American Statements," 1 January 1958, 130.23/3087/12.)
15. The meeting actually took place on 30 November. According to Dulles's report, the question of scientific cooperation was not discussed. On this meeting and what Dulles said at the opening of the NATO conference, see ibid.
16. In File 130.23/3090/5.
17. This document has not been found attached to this document, but the reference is evidently to the document cited in n. 14 above.

186. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 February 1958

Coded Tel. 370; Inc.: 130.09/2312/6

The embassy sums up the attitude of the State Department to the federation of Egypt and Syria, based on talks with some senior officials. They consider the matter as being most serious, especially because of the propaganda effect and the pressure it will bring to bear on the other countries of the region. They relate with scepticism, but not with total disregard, to Nasser's inferences, that the federation would serve as a barrier to the spread of Communism. In the meantime they are refraining from any public reaction, since they recall how badly they fared during the Syria–Turkey crisis,[1] when both the Saudis and the Jordanians publicly announced their support of Syria.[2] At the same time, they are aware of the concern of Jordan and Lebanon, and will guarantee them aid in times of difficulty. They have apparently tried to gain King Saud's support against the federation. It seems that King Hussein is initiating the creation of an organization to counter this step.[3]

Notes

1. In September-October 1957, there was a crisis in the relations between Turkey and Syria, after the Soviet Union and Syria alleged that Turkey was massing military forces along its border with Syria and planned an invasion to replace the regime there, with the help of the United States. These charges were denied by both by Turkey and the United States. During a news conference on 16 October, Dulles said that in the event of a Soviet attack on Turkey the United States would not restrict itself to purely defensive actions. The matter was also discussed at the 12th session of the U.N. General Assembly, at the Syria's request, but no resolution was passed and no action taken.
2. King Saud came to Damascus in late September 1957; the communiqué published at the end of his visit stated that Saudi Arabia would come to the aid of Syria and other Arab states against any aggression. King Hussein announced on 16 October that his country would view an attack on Syria to be an attack on all Arab countries.
3. In fact, on 14 February 1958, the Iraqi-Jordanian union was established as a counterweight to that between Egypt and Syria.
4. See the briefing cabled to the heads of Israeli missions about the union of Egypt and Syria, 31 January 1958, 130.09/2377/7.

187. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 February 1958

Coded Tel. NWT666; Inc.: 130.09/2338/26

Eban reports to Mrs. Meir on his meeting with Herter.[1] He told him that recent events in the Middle East require attention to the Israeli side of the matter. The federation of Egypt and Syria is in fact the subordination of Syria to Egypt, while both are subject to strong Soviet influence. The economic and organizational deficiency of the new body, as well as the internal agitation within Syria against this dependence, could bring Cairo and Damascus to seek new escapades, both through the addition of other states and the threat of hostilities against Israel. The prospects of the federation succeeding are unclear and thus the United States would do best to express its objection to it and not consider its continued existence inevitable.

The Jordan–Iraq federation raises problems due to the fact that Iraq does not have an armistice agreement with Israel. In addition to the formal issue, a political problem arises because of Iraq's attitude to Israel. There is also the question as to whether the two federations will abide by the United Nations Charter, and especially the article calling for the respect of territorial integrity of all countries and refraining from the use of force in international relations.[2]

The Arab federations reinforce the need to strengthen Israel. In his Note to the prime minister, the secretary of state expressed the willingness of the United States to ensure Israel's sovereignty and integrity.[3] Ways must be found to give greater clarity and emphasis to this policy statement.

Eban sums up by stating that his statement was an attempt to define a number of problems that have arisen and it is possible that by the time the secretary of state returns Eban will have consulted with his government and made some concrete proposals.

In his reply, Herter has a number of reservations not only regarding the Egyptian-Syrian federation but also regarding that of Jordan and Iraq. Eban's impression is that the Americans' main concern is the fate of the Baghdad Pact, the significance of the federation with regard to the economy and citizenship, the solution of the refugee problem, and the possibility of obtaining from Iraq an undertaking to respect the armistice agreement as well as the representation of the new federations at the United Nations.

Notes

1. In the exchange of telegrams between Eban and Meir, the former requested instructions in advance of this meeting. Meir directed him to say that Israel was apprehensive in light of the possibility of being a neighbour of Iraq, given its radical hostility to Israel and the absence of an armistice with it. She added that for the present it was better to listen than to speak. (See Eban to the United States Division, W406, 11 February 1958, 130.09/2312/6; Meir to the Israel embassy in Washington, W693, 12 February 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)
2. Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter deals with the obligation of all member states to refrain from the threat or use of armed force against the territorial integrity or independence of another state.
3. See No. 185 and n. 13 there.
4. For the meeting between Dulles and Eban, see No. 189.
5. Three words are missing in the original.

188. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 26 February 1958

Coded Tel. 719; Outg.: 130.09/2312/5

Directives to Eban for his meeting with Dulles:[1]

He should state that Israel is not indifferent to the federations and is concerned about the security problems that have arisen. It does not wish to harm the West and thus has acted with restraint up to now and hopes that its interests will be taken into consideration. The changes that have come about require an urgent reassessment of the situation with the United States concerning the security connection between the two countries in accordance with the statement made by Dulles at the NATO conference in Paris. Formal definitions will not suffice, rather a request should be made to hold a discussion on specific arrangements.

Regarding the Egyptian-Syrian federation, there is no doubt that the Soviet Union will exploit this for its own ends and increase its political influence and military aid. Therefore, the United States must make it clear to the new republic that the integrity and security of the State of Israel are an integral part of American interests in the region and any attack on Israel will result in American intervention. Furthermore, the United States must assist Israel's security by direct military aid or financial assistance for the purchase of arms.

As for the Jordan–Iraq federation, the United States must clarify its plans for the future, and obtain guarantees regarding its attitude toward Israel. It

must ensure that Iraq will guarantee not to move military forces to the West Bank of the Jordan River, that the border will remain quiet, infiltration will be prevented, and inflammatory speeches will cease.

The issue of Iraq signing an armistice agreement should not be raised, nor the demand that it absorb refugees. It is preferable that the Americans raise the first issue at their own initiative, and this should be followed by discussions, and as for the second matter, there is the danger that such a proposal would meet with counter-demands from Iraq.

Notes

1. On 24 February, Eban reported to the M.F.A. that a meeting had been arranged for him with Dulles to discuss economic matters and the issue of the Arab political unions would certainly come up. He requested instructions. (See his telegram, W466, 130.09/2312/6.)
2. The Research Division of the M.F.A. sent a summary of some of these speeches to the Israel missions abroad (see Research Division to the Israel Mission at United Nations, 711, 20 February 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)
3. The prime minister of Iraq, Nuri al-Said, was also the prime minister of the Iraq-Jordanian federation.

189. Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 February 1958

Coded Tel. NWT689; Inc.: 130.09/2338/26

Eban reports on his meeting with Dulles, which was also attended by Herzog, Rountree, and Burgess.

He began by referring to the matter of the loan for Israel's water project[1] stating that there has been progress and agreement is near. He hopes that very soon an additional loan will be made available for the completion of the project. Dulles stressed that he would be unable to force the Export-Import Bank to make the loan since this was an independent institution. The main thing is that the first step has been taken and it will now be easier for the State Department to bring pressure to bear for further small loans rather than a single large sum.

Eban moved on to the matter of the federations in the Arab world. He pointed out the problems that Israel is facing as a consequence, basing his explanations on the directive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[3] He stated that Israel is more concerned about the practical aspects than the formal

side. The United States could help matters by ensuring that the Iraqi army does not move closer, by maintaining the balance of arms and by assuring Iraq that it has nothing to fear from Israel. The situation requires the strengthening of Israel, a clear statement that the United States objects to aggression against Israel, and the development of the suggestion made to the prime minister, of consultation between the United States and Israel on security issues.

Dulles replied that he will react to the Israeli proposals after due consideration. Meanwhile, he wants to discuss two matters: pressure is being brought to bear on the United States to join the Baghdad Pact, and there are those who advocate that the United States mitigate its attitude to Nasser. He asked for Israel's opinion on this.

Eban replied that the United States joining the Baghdad Pact would be a mistake and a breach of the balance of its relations with the countries of the Middle East as long as it has no contractual relations with Israel. He pointed out that Nasser's relations with the Soviet Union are an expression of his ingrained international and anti-West views which are incorrigible. In his opinion, the United States would be mistaken to show any support for Nasser until he changes his policy. While Eban was speaking, Dulles and Rountree exchanged glances and it would appear that a controversy exists within the State Department, where pressure is being brought to bear on the secretary of state to take steps to support at least one of the Arab federations, while the secretary of state is advocating a policy of "wait and see" and a certain measure of detachment.

Notes

1. On Israel's request for a loan for irrigation projects, see No. 185, n. 3, and chapter 2.
2. At a meeting on 28 January 1958; see Eban to the M.F.A., W344, 28 January 1958, 130.09/2312/6.
3. See No. 188.
4. See ibid., n. 2.

190. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 5 March 1958

Coded Tel. 730; Outg.: 130.09/2312/5

The Division's reaction to Eban's meeting with Dulles.

Regarding their support of the Yarmuk project, no reaction is to be

expected during the next two days but the tendency is in the direction of the cables from Eban and Sherman and that from the Division.[2]

As for Dulles's question concerning the United States joining the Baghdad Pact and the attempt to appease Nasser, care should be taken, first of all, to ensure that the conversation between Dulles and Eban on this issue[3] not be construed by the State Department as consultation between the two countries. As for the issue itself, an opportunity should be found to stress that Israel's attitude remains unchanged and that Israel objects to the United States joining the pact without a parallel step being taken as regards Israel, especially since the federation with Jordan disrupts the balance of power in the region. Regarding Nasser, the arguments put forward by Eban should be reiterated. It should be stressed that any steps taken to placate Nasser would negatively influence supporters of the West in the region, including the peripheral countries, which are struggling alongside the supporters of the West against its enemies.

Notes

1. The reference is to the Jordanian East Ghor Canal project. In his meeting with Eban, Dulles said that the United States had decided to respond favourably to Jordan's request for assistance in implementing the project. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 10, pp. 24-26.) See also No. 58.
2. These telegrams deal with the manner in which Israel should react to the decision by the United States to provide assistance for the East Ghor project, especially given that there had not yet been a response to Israel's request for support for its water projects. Eban, who was then in London, cabled that the matter of assistance to Jordan should not be linked with that of assistance to Israel (Telegrams 885, 2 March 1958, and 886, 3 March 1958, both in File 130.09/2322/2). Sherman suggested saying that Israel viewed the loan to Jordan as the start of implementation of the Johnston Plan, according to the principle of separate funding for each state within the borders of the plan, and that it considered itself free to work on the Jordan and Yarmuk in the framework of the Johnston plan and would present a request to the Government of United States to begin negotiations to fund these projects. (See Sherman to Eban, 2 March 1958, 130.09/2338/27.) A telegram from the M.F.A. (TNW106, 3.3.1958, 130.09/2312/11) stated that there was a disposition to accept Eban's proposal.
3. See No. 189.
4. During the meeting, which took place on 5 March, Meroz was told that with regard to the Baghdad Pact there was no change in the position of United States, whereas vis-à-vis Nasser the aspiration was "correct relations". (See Meroz to the M.F.A., W498, 5 March 1958, 130.09/2312/6.)

191. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 March 1958

Coded Tel. TNW118; Outg.: 130.09/2312/11

Eban is instructed to inform Herter, in the absence of Dulles, of the prime minister's replies to the issues he had raised:

Regarding the Baghdad Pact:[1] the Government of Israel has deliberated on this matter and its attitude toward the United States joining the pact is definitely negative. The pact is a hostile device and the belief that it would divert Iraq's attention away from Israel to the Soviet danger has proven erroneous. Accession to the pact by the United States without security guarantees on its part for Israel would adversely effect Israel. Regarding the improvement of relations with Nasser, Israel believes it to be hopeless, and this has been proved by his behaviour toward Sudan, Bourguiba and other Arab countries in the region.

Notes

1. See No. 189.
2. The reference is to the recall of the heads of mission of the two countries in 1956, in the wake of the Sinai campaign; see Introduction, p. xliii.

192. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 25 March 1958

Coded Tel. W553; Outg.: 130.09/2312/6

Eban outlines the main points to be brought up at his forthcoming meeting with Herter:[1]

He will put forward arguments against softening the American stand towards Nasser,[2] and argue that it is imperative that the United States grant assistance to the water project. He will inquire about the intention to raise the matter of the Middle East at the forthcoming summit[5] meeting and will stress that the United States should exploit this meeting to declare its intention to intervene in the case of any attempt to attack any Middle East country, including Israel. He requests further instructions.[6]

Notes

1. There is no report on this conversation in the files of the M.F.A. The Americans have published only the section dealing with water issues. According to them, it was decided that the Israel embassy in Washington would submit a memorandum on this matter to the State Department. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 14, pp. 31-34; see also No. 61 and n. 2 there.)
2. See No. 189.
3. On 24 March, King Saud, on account of dissension within the royal family, was forced to transfer broad powers in matters of foreign affairs and defence to his brother, Crown Prince Faisal, who was considered to be pro-Nasser. At the State Department it was feared that this development would lead to an emphasis on Saudi neutrality and a certain cooling in its relations with United States. (See Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., W557, 26 March 1958, 130.09/3212/6.)
4. No report on this meeting has been found.
5. The proposal for a summit conference was made by the Soviets and was on the agenda in December 1957-January 1958. The summit never took place.
6. In its reply, the M.F.A. wrote that it was proposed to emphasize that the events in Saudi Arabia threatened the stability and security of Lebanon as well. It should be explained that Israel would begin work to draw water from the Jordan River whenever the Jordanians began to pump from the Yarmuk. Approval was given to Eban's intention to argue that the common interest of Israel, the United States, and European countries in preserving regional security required "practical defence contacts" that had not existed do date. Dulles should be asked to reply to the questions raised by Eban regarding the Arab political unions and especially the Iraqi army. Eban should also raise an additional argument against the United States' joining the Baghdad Pact. The telegram from the M.F.A. concludes, "we hope you will have the opportunity to raise all this in a single meeting." (See M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Washington, telegram 774, 26 March 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)

193. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 8 April 1958

Coded Tel. TNW172; Outg.: 130.09/2312/11

The Division reports on the meeting between Lawson and the minister of foreign affairs.[1] His main complaint was about the frigates.[2] Their arrival in Eilat has created a further complication that restricts the ability of the United States to contribute towards maintaining tranquillity in the Middle East and their withdrawal would strengthen the constructive forces in the area. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia fears that if the ships remain in Eilat this will constitute a danger to pilgrimage.

The minister of foreign affairs replied at length. She detailed the recent

Arab attacks, including the incident in the Lakhish region[3] and the shelling in the north.[4] She defined the Saudis' fear that the pilgrimage would be endangered as pure nonsense, and recalled that Israel had requested the Americans to inform the Saudis that Israel is ready to assist the pilgrims to reach Mecca. She reiterated the argument that the Arabs raise continuous demands and the fulfillment of each one leads to further demands. The ships are required in Eilat for essential security purposes and the recent acquisition by Egypt of submarines has only reinforced this necessity. Israel has never received an explicit promise to guarantee its borders. Lawson asked if Israel would be satisfied with a non-aggression undertaking by the Arabs. The minister replied that a promise made in a speech is of no value. Only if the Arabs signed a non-aggression pact, even clandestinely, would Israel consider this as a change in the situation.[6]

Notes

1. The question of navigation in the Gulf of Eilat came up in the meeting between Rountree and Herzog. The position of United States was presented in the spirit of Lawson's remarks to Meir, presented below. (See Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., W584, 4 April 1958, 130.09/2312/7.)
2. The frigates INS *Mivtah* and INS *Miznaq* reached Eilat on 25 December 1956, after sailing from Haifa around the Cape of Good Hope, in order to guarantee free passage through the Straits of Tiran. Eventually the two vessels were sold to Ceylon; see No. 482.
3. On 5 April 1958, two residents of the Lakhish region were murdered. The attackers' footprints led back to a village near Hebron.
4. On 30-31 March 1958, the Syrians opened fire on workers who were excavating a drainage canal south of Lake Hula. The incident led to Syrian shelling of the Mishmar Hayarden sector as far as Hulata; see No. 155.
5. See No. 185 and n. 2 there.
6. Meroz reported that he had seen additional instructions sent to Lawson, according to which the ambassador was to hold another meeting as soon as possible and ask that Israel reconsider its position, with the aim of enhancing tranquillity in the region. It was Meroz's impression that these instructions "make a clear impression of doing one's duty." (See the Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., W611, 11 April 1958, 130.09/2312/7.)

194. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division (Jerusalem) and A. Eban (New York). 21 April 1958

Coded Tel. W638; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

Herter summoned the ambassador to an urgent meeting, but in his absence told Meroz that the State Department is concerned about plans for a parade to be held in Jerusalem.[1] They are aware that heavy weapons will be included and will be loaded. The Jordanians have protested and they too have brought up forces to Jerusalem and threatened to complain to the Security Council. The State Department is not about to declare which side has violated the armistice agreement,[2] but out of concern for its citizens it intends to publish a recommendation for them to leave Jerusalem.[3] Meroz replied that he will inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately. He did, however, point out that a few weeks previously Israel had informed the Jordanians and the United Nations of the parade and its character and there is no need for concern. The embassy requests that the Ambassador be instructed to contact Herter urgently.[4]

Notes

1. This was stated at a meeting between Dulles and Eban on 27 March (No. 189). The secretary of state said that he hoped that events of Israel's tenth anniversary year would not revive the issue of Jerusalem, on which Israel and United States disagreed. (See Herzog to the M.F.A., telegram 485, 2 March 1958, 130.09/2312/6.)
2. The armistice agreement between Israel and Jordan limited the military forces of the two sides to defensive formations only in areas extending for ten kilometres on either side of the armistice lines.
3. The advisory stated that in the light of reports of tension in the Jerusalem area as a result of Israel's intention to hold a large military parade there, the State Department advised American citizens not to visit Jerusalem until the tension had abated (telegram W639, 21 April 1958, 130.09/2312/7).
4. See No. 195.

195. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 25 April 1958.

Coded Tel. W654; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

Eban reports on his conversation with Herter concerning the Israel Defence Forces parade in Jerusalem. The latter agrees that the tension should be

ended.[1] The panic was caused by reports by the United Nations from Jerusalem. He stated that there is no intention of recommending U.S. citizens not to visit Jerusalem, and requested that the exchanges between Israel and the U.S., and between Ben-Gurion and Hammarskjöld on this matter not be given publicity.[2,3]

Notes

1. For publication of the advisory notice to U.S. citizens not to visit Jerusalem, see No. 194 and n. 3 there.
2. In a communication from Ben-Gurion to Hammarskjöld, dated 22 April, the U.N. representatives in Israel are accused of helping to fan tensions about the Independence Day parade; Ben-Gurion stated that that the United Nations was adopting an unbalanced position by ignoring various violations of the armistice agreements and Security Council resolutions. Hammarskjöld rejected Ben-Gurion's arguments. (The messages are in File 130.16/2956/9.)
3. Meir reacted to Herter's remarks about publication of the exchange of messages between Ben-Gurion and Hammarskjöld: "Why is this Herter's business? Are the State Department and the secretary-general one and the same?" (See the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Washington, W818, 25 April 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)

196. Israel Ambassador in Washington to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 13 May 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3091/2

Eban presents a review of American aid to Israel during the recently-ended fiscal year. This aid amounted to $83.55 million, the major part of which was granted under the Public Law 480 and the Mutual Security Act. This figure proves that this has been the most generous period during the history of the United States government's aid to Israel. This success is due to from the tranquil relations existing between the two countries since the Sinai Campaign, the realization by the American government that Israel is weighed down by a heavy security burden, and the support of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. On the other hand, there was a problem of overcoming obstacles such as the reservations expressed by financial circles in the United States concerning Israel's policy and economic regime. There is also a lack of confidence in Israel's economic future and concern about Israel's immigration policy, since each time it becomes stable a new source of immigration is revealed and this returns the economy to an

unstable situation. In order to overcome this obstacle, Eban proposes to examine the possibility of an economic inquiry to be carried out by recognized experts, with the purpose of proving that there is a future to Israel's economy. The matter of immigration requires further explanation.

It will not be easy to guarantee continuation of the same level of aid during the coming year. The chances are dependent on a number of factors among which are the extent of the general aid package and whether the same type of relations between the two countries are maintained. Stress must be placed on the request for aid for the Israel water project parallel to that being granted to the Jordanian project. During the course of discussions he has held recently, he has gained the impression that there are good prospects that this request would be granted.

Notes

1. See No. 185 and n. 3 there.
2. The reference is to the nuclear reactor in Nahal Soreq used for research for peaceful purposes.
3. The remarks are included in the Note from President Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion dated 2 March 1957; see Vol. 12.
4. John G. Haggerty, the head of the United States Operations Mission in Israel, insisted that assistance from the Development Loan Fund (D.L.F.) be given chiefly to private-sector rather than government enterprises. See the correspondence between Eban and Dillon–letter from Eban, dated 11 March, and Dillon's reply, dated 20 March, 130.02/5934/66.
5. The D.L.F. loan was not approved until May 1960; see Vol. 14, No. 157.

197. Editorial Note

The Lebanon Crisis in the Summer of 1958

After the establishment of the United Arab Republic, in February 1958, strife erupted in Lebanon between supporters of the country's independence and pro-Western orientation, headed by President Camille Chamoun and Prime Minister Sami al-Sulh, and the Nasserists, who wanted their country to join the new union. The latter were headed by the Muslim leaders Sa'eb Slam, Abdullah al-Yafi, and Rashid Karameh, and the Druze Kamal Junblat, who formed a bloc called the National Front. The opposition to the regime had a violent character. At first members of the Front portrayed their struggle as directed against President Chamoun's intention to amend

the constitution so that he could run for re-election (his term of office was due to expire in September 1958). But events escalated and the general strike that broke out in May 1958 turned into an armed insurrection and undeclared civil war. The Government of Lebanon maintained that outside forces based in Syria were supporting the rebels. These claims were denied both by the rebels and by the U.A.R., who maintained that the conflict was an internal Lebanese affair. Lebanon brought the matter to the Arab League Council. Failing to receive satisfaction there, on 28 May it lodged a complaint against the U.A.R. with the U.N. Security Council, which decided to dispatch a group of military observers to Lebanon. Because most of the areas along the Syrian border were controlled by the rebels, who did not allow the U.N. observers to approach the border itself or the rebel strongholds, nothing in the observers' testimony was relevant. Nor did Hammarskjöld's visit to Lebanon help the situation, which in fact became more serious after the coup in Iraq on 14 June 1958. President Chamoun, apprehensive about his country's independence, requested assistance from the United States, which decided to send in the Marines. This force remained in Lebanon until stability was restored in October 1958. (See Y. Shimoni, *The Arab States; Their Contemporary History and Politics* [Hebrew], pp. 265-267 and 486-488.)

198. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 13 May 1958

Coded Tel. W706; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

The Israel embassy in the United States has been informed that the secretary of state is considering taking urgent action in Lebanon after President Chamoun informed the United States that his country has been attacked by a foreign country.[1] The Americans believe that this is no longer a case of a constitutional dispute but a further chapter in the general struggle. The United States will thus do its utmost to prevent Lebanon from collapsing. The United States has the following options: to turn to the Security Council, to activate the Eisenhower Doctrine,[2] or to invoke article 51 of the United Nations Charter.[3] It was stated that the latter option was the least complicated, although there is no guarantee that it will be applied.[4]

Notes

1. See the preceding Editorial Note.
2. The reference is to the Eisenhower Doctrine, submitted to Congress on 5 January 1957 by the president. He requested authority to extend military and economic aid to Middle Eastern countries that requested it and to use American forces to defend the independence and territorial integrity of any country in the region against overt armed aggression by a country dominated by international Communism.
3. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter permits member states to act in self-defence, whether on their own or with allies, against any armed aggression, if the Security Council has not taken the measures required to preserve peace.
4. In the wake of this telegram, Eban proposed that the M.F.A. advise the United States to act as it had done in April 1957, when Nasser attempted to overthrow King Hussein (see Eban to the M.F.A., telegram 707, 13 May 1958, 130.09/2312/7). In its reply, the M.F.A. wrote that the prime minister favoured the third alternative proposed, or if not, at least according to the second one, "but the main thing is to emphasize the supreme urgency of extending aid." (See Comay to the Israel embassy in Washington, W866, 14 May 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)

199. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 May 1958

Coded Tel. W717; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

In the absence of the ambassador, Herzog and Meroz have held what was defined as a preliminary discussion with Rockwell on the Lebanon crisis. Israel is most concerned over the crisis. The possible fall of Lebanon would be disastrous for all the countries of the region. The United States has given a solemn undertaking to defend Lebanon, and thus its actions in this crisis will be examined by the other states of the region which have received similar undertakings, as a criterion by which to measure the effectiveness of United States' assurances. Israel has advised the United States to announce its preparedness to come to the aid of Lebanon as required by the United Nations Charter, or alternatively, in keeping with the Eisenhower Doctrine.

Rockwell replied that the United States concurs with Israel's appraisement of the situation. It has already informed Lebanon that it will be prepared to come to its aid.

Herzog asked if the undertaking referred to aggression from outside or also to the internal collapse of the regime. Rockwell replied that there is a difference between the two situations, but the justification for intervention is a function of the danger to national independence. In any case, it will not refrain from giving any type of aid requested by Lebanon.

Notes

1. See Nos. 197, 198.
2. In April 1957 King Hussein announced the discovery of an Egyptian-Syrian plot against him. He dismissed his government, which had leftist tendencies and had decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. In the wake of the ensuing riots and demonstrations in Jordan, all political parties were banned. A planned military coup against the king was frustrated after Hussein managed to persuade the senior echelons of the army to support him. During the crisis United States sent units of the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean, in accordance with the Eisenhower Doctrine.
3. Several words are missing in the original.
4. Abd-ul-Hamid Sarraj, the interior minister of the Syrian region of the United Arab Republic.

200. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 May 1958

Coded Tel. W724; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

At a meeting with Herter, Eban outlined Israel's views regarding the situation in Lebanon. He stated that the reaction of the United States in this crisis would be a decisive test of American undertakings in the region and in the entire world. The president and the Congress had in the previous year announced that the independence and integrity of the countries of the Middle East was of vital interest to the United States. If Nasser succeeds in toppling the regime in Lebanon, then it will be Jordan's turn, setting in motion a series of collapses. The insurgents have been encouraged by what seems to them Nasser's success both with request to the Soviet Union and the United States.

Herter and Rockwell, who was also present at the meeting, replied that the United States is determined to assist Lebanon to stand firm and has thus informed Chamoun. They said that if the United States were forced to intervene, the problem of overflights could arise.

Eban points out that during the course of the day he met with various members of Congress and public figures who expressed their concern at the situation in Lebanon and would demand the full support of the United States.

Notes

1. This telegram has not been found.
2. On 13 May 1958, the military commanders in Algeria rebelled against the French government. This was followed by a series of events that brought France to the brink of chaos. Stability was restored only after Charles de Gaulle was appointed premier in June 1958.

201. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 May 1958

Coded Tel. W774; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

Eban has spoken to Dulles about the situation in Lebanon. He stressed the vital necessity of saving Chamoun's government and preventing a victory by Nasser. He welcomes the comment made by the secretary of state about United States responsibility for the integrity and independence of all the countries in the Middle East, but criticized the steps towards reconciliation between the United States and Nasser[3] which have encouraged pro-Nasser elements in the area in general and especially in Lebanon. In the light of the situation, it is essential that joint planning be undertaken by the countries opposing Nasser and clear undertakings given by the United States of effective and immediate aid to these countries.

The secretary of state began by expressing his appreciation for the line Israel has taken regarding its border with Lebanon[4] and he defined it as "a very important gesture at an important time". He explained that the United States' undertakings are "far-reaching and definitive". The question of Chamoun continuing to rule is most complicated and there are many aspects to it, but the United States will support him for the remaining months of his term of office and if he is re-elected, although it is not encouraging him to seek an additional term. Rockwell, who was present at the meeting, stated that the United States will support Lebanon at the expected debate in the Security Council. He asked what Israel's stand would be if it became necessary to land American troops in Lebanon, and if such an act would not lead to the detachment of Iraq and Jordan from the West. Eban replied that any alternative, including the latter, is preferable to coming to terms with the fall of Lebanon. Such an act would strengthen the status of the United States in the world and the region.

The conversation then moved to a general discussion about Nasser and his policy. Dulles said that he has not changed his mind about Nasser and he is certain that he is inspired by a pan-Arab dream that is no different from

Hitler's pan-German fantasy. He favours constant movement and is not concerned with reinforcing and stabilizing his country, but rather to incite the masses. To this end he has mobilized large resources resulting from his contacts with the Soviet Union. It is not the arms that he is amassing but the slogans he is spreading that capture the imagination of the masses and the governments.

Summing up the meeting, it was decided that Eban would put in writing a number of conclusions relating to the advantages and weakness of the American policy as expressed in the Eisenhower Doctrine.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 200.
2. See Editorial Note, No. 197.
3. In late April 1958, the United States unfroze the blocked accounts of Egypt, after the signing of an agreement between Egyptian representatives and representatives of the shareholders of the Suez Canal company for the payment of compensation to the latter. On 8 May, Assistant Secretary of State William Rountree told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States had cancelled some of the restrictions on the shipment of semi-military materials to the U.A.R. He noted that this step reflected an improvement in the relations between the two countries and that the Administration hoped the process would continue.
4. Israel notified Lebanon, through the United States, that it could mobilize the troops stationed along its border with Israel to put down the rebellion without fearing an Israeli attack. (See Herzog to the M.F.A., W718, 14 May 1958, 130.09/2312/7; Comay to the Israel embassy in Washington, telegram 870, 15 May 1958, 130.09/2312/5; Herzog to the M.F.A., W727, 16 May 1958, 130.09/2312/7.)
5. The memorandum, dated 26 June 1958 (in File 130.23/39/9) deals with the need to halt Soviet-Nasserite influence in the Middle East and Africa and includes a number of recommendations for accomplishing this. See also Nos. 202 and 203.

202. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division and R. Shiloah. 3 June 1958

Coded Tel. 811; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

Eban formulates points for the memorandum the secretary of state had requested from Israel regarding United States Middle East policy. He outlines the formulation of the Eisenhower Doctrine and lists its achievements and its failures. His conclusions are that if they wish the doctrine to be effective, its interpretation and application must be extended

so that there can be no doubt about the desire of the United States to aid all the countries of the region and to guarantee their independence and integrity. The United States must take a decision to fully support all the friendly anti-Nasserist states in the region and to dissociate itself from Nasser. Israel must maintain the policy it has always followed of refraining from worrying about the problems of peace between itself and Arabs until the process of its consolidation and entrenchment has matured, and the Arabs realize that they must accept reality. Israel must complete its integration within the outer circle of the region by establishing relations with states such as Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, and the countries of Africa, and the United States should encourage this process. The United States must accelerate the laying of the pipeline from Eilat to the Mediterranean and encourage the Iranians to take steps in this direction. Finally, and perhaps as a first step, the United States should endeavour to bring about the cessation of virulent anti-Israel propaganda in Baghdad and Amman, and at times in Beirut as well.

Notes

1. In this telegram, Shiloah informed Eban that great importance was being attached to the memorandum that Dulles had asked him to submit (see No. 201). He was requested to transmit as soon as possible his thoughts concerning its content (telegram dated 2 June 1958, in File 130.09/2312/5).
2. James P. Richards, special assistant to the president of the United States, was dispatched to a number of Middle Eastern countries in May 1957 to explain the Eisenhower Doctrine.
3. See No. 199, n. 2.
4. See No. 186 and n. 1 there.
5. In April 1958, the first conference of independent African states was held in Accra, Ghana. The U.A.R. wanted the conference to adopt a resolution supporting "the rights of the Palestinians" but encountered opposition from Liberia and Ghana. In the end a milder resolution that called for a "just solution" of the Palestine problem was adopted.
6. In May 1958, West Germany decided to extend a credit line of DM350 million to the U.A.R. for the purchase of agricultural and industrial equipment, in exchange for a commitment by the latter to return German assets frozen during World War II.
7. See No. 21 and n. 2 there.
8. See No. 203.

203. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 June 1958

Coded Tel. TNW422; Outg.: 130.09/2312/11

Shiloah continues his comments on the memorandum Israel has been requested to prepare for the Americans.[1] The prime minister wishes to comment that "up till now Israel has not yet heard a clear statement on the maintenance of its independence and territorial integrity and it is undesirable to put these words into Dulles's mouth rather to demand that he express them himself." The prime minister also points out that the anti-Israel incitement of the Hashemite kingdoms has not fortified them against Nasser and this incitement will not cease until the United States expresses unequivocally that no aggressive action should be taken against Israel's territorial integrity.

The minister of foreign affairs comments that in the first paragraph the terminology should be as follows: "the maintenance of the independence and integrity of the countries of the region against any attack from any quarter, that is, not only by the Soviet Union and Nasser, but also Iraq". An explicit clause concerning increased economic aid for the region, including Israel, should be added to the conclusions.[4]

General comments by the Ministry: it should be stressed that the main issue in the region is the Nasserist subversion. Dulles's own words should be quoted, comparing pan-Arabism to Hitler's policies. The criterion for success or failure of the doctrine is whether or not Nasser is stopped. Pro-Western forces exist in the region and they must be encouraged, and as an example mention should be made of Turkey, Jordan and Sudan. In the section of conclusions and proposals, Nasser's exclusive domination of the oil routes should be mentioned.

Notes

1. No. 202.
2. Eban's answer to this question has not been found.
3. No. 201.
4. In a later telegram Shiloah wrote that the foreign minister wanted to add the following clause to her formulation: "the very existence of Israel serves as encouragement to these countries" and also to add proposals for the development of water resources. Shiloah himself proposed toning down the wording of section 4 in the same chapter, because "the situation in Lebanon is not encouraging." (See Shiloah to Eban, telegram 934, 9 June 1958, 130.09/2312/5.)

204. Y. Meroz (Washington) to the Director of the United States Division. 27 June 1958.

Copy: 130.23/3103/10

Meroz reports on the conversation the Israeli minister had held, together with him, with Rockwell.[1] The Israeli complaint was raised regarding American pressure on countries not to situate their diplomatic missions in Jerusalem. Rockwell denied that such pressure had been applied. The United States has "advised" certain countries, but they are free to do as they please. He then admitted that the advice of the United States was given not only to those who had requested it but also to those countries that had not even asked for its opinion. Regarding Ghana, he added, they have had their own doubts and they do not have the impression that the stand of the United States has been decisive in their case.[2]

The minister and Meroz replied that the involvement of the United States had harmed Israel's external relations both substantively and psychologically, and especially with regard to the peoples of Asia and Africa. Pressure on Ghana regarding the location of its embassy, for example, would most certainly influence these relations.

The conversation ended with a promise by Rockwell that they will be "only too happy" to re-examine their stand on this issue, but he is unable to promise any change. Meroz states that it would be advisable to speak to Hamilton who is about to replace Burgess in the State Department.[3, 4]

Notes

1. See the Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., telegram W886, 26 June 1958, 130.09/2312/7. Among other things Rockwell said that United States was aware of the potential grave results of intervention in Lebanon, but was equally mindful of the serious implications of non-intervention. Another matter discussed was the position of the United States on the location of embassies in Jerusalem, as detailed below.
2. In June 1958, the United States "advised" Ghana not to establish its embassy in Jerusalem (see the M.F.A. to the Israel ambassador in Washington, telegram 976, 24 June 1958, 130.09/2312/5). In 1956, American pressure had forced Cuba to rescind its decision to move its legation from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (see Gazit to Meir, 14 July 1957, 130.23/3121/25).
3. In the wake of this meeting, and that between the Dulles and Eban on 30 June (No. 205), the State Department prepared a memorandum for Herter according to which the position of United States was a matter of United Nations concern and members of the U.N. ought not to take action that might be detrimental to the U.N. interest in this matter. The authors of the memorandum submitted two recommendations to Dulles: (1) To authorize State Department officials to tell the Israelis that the matter

was being re-examined and the State Department continued to believe the that the future of Jerusalem was a matter of United Nations concern; accordingly the department intended to maintain its policy of seeking support for its position from other United Nations members. (2) Should the question of the transfer of diplomatic missions to Jerusalem be brought to the attention of United States, it would continue to discourage countries from doing so. These recommendations were approved by Herter on 17 August 1958. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, No. 27, pp. 65-66.) Remarks in this vein were made by Hamilton to Meroz on 10 October 1958 (see Meroz to the M.F.A., WNT532, 10 October 1958, 130.09/2314/7). On the role of United States in the transfer of the Liberian embassy from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, see Nos. 229-232.

4. Ben-Horin noted in the margin of this document: "Mr. G. Avner, I would be delighted to meet with Hamilton to discuss our relations with the countries of Asia and Africa before he leaves the country". E. Ben-Horin 6.7.[1958].

205. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 July 1958

Coded Tel. 896; Inc.: 130.09/2312/7

The meeting with Dulles lasted about one hour and was attended by Herzog, Rockwell and Burgess.[1]

At first Eban spoke about a number of issues on the agenda between the two countries.

Water: Eban stated that Israel insists that there be equality and symmetry of American support for the Jordanian project and the Israeli project. The Israel government will submit a detailed proposal to the Development Loan Fund and would be glad to receive a decision in principle under the same conditions as were granted to Jordan, i.e., works outside the demilitarized zone and retaining the amounts allocated by Johnston.

Arms: he repeated his statement to Rountree[2] and drew their attention to the current requests submitted by Israel that have been delayed, especially for half-track vehicles, recoilless guns and anti-aircraft artillery.

Jerusalem: he complained about United States intervention to prevent countries (such as Ghana) from locating their embassies in Jerusalem.

But the main issue was the opposition by the free countries of the region to expansion by Nasser and United States support of this opposition. The immediate test will be Lebanon; its abandonment by the United States will damage its credibility in the eyes of the entire world. Eban analysed the arguments against any energetic action and proposed the creation of a United Nations force set up by Security Council resolution.

Dulles replied to each of the issues:

Concerning water, he requested clarification from his aides and after listening to them replied that he would take counsel and advise.

Rockwell replied on the matter of arms. The United States deals efficiently with most of the items requested, but Israel can obtain heavy equipment from other sources. The secretary of state stated that the State Department would reply favourably to requests submitted with the purpose of replacing outdated equipment.

As for Jerusalem, he expressed his astonishment at the activist line and instructed that the matter be reconsidered.[6]

His main comments referred to the situation in Lebanon. He said he had read the Israeli memorandum[3] and found it most instructive. He told them of his conversation with Malik of Lebanon. He had stated that armed intervention is the "lesser of two evils" but the danger is that it could weaken Iraq and Jordan. A government in the Middle East that depended on Western bayonets would be removed once the bayonets were withdrawn. At the same time he objects to a compromise solution, i.e., any compromise with Nasser. Such a compromise would mean that Nasser would swallow Lebanon in two bites instead of one. The matter of the successor to Chamoun at the end of his term will have to be dealt with candidly. It is not at all certain that he has given up the idea of a second term. The successor must be a person who will not introduce far-reaching changes in Lebanon, but also some one who will not lead it to submission.

He then spoke about the lack of support by the countries of the West. The attitude of NATO is negative, and the United Nations secretary-general objects to intervention. However, the United States has not given up the possibility of intervention. Soviet threats have not deterred it, despite statements coming from Cairo. The sending of United Nations forces to Lebanon is not possible because of the atmosphere prevailing at the United Nations. Hammarskjöld is convinced that he has been successful in Cairo and is advising against any further action. If it becomes apparent that Hammarskjöld's proposal of sending observers does not solve the problem they will submit it to the Security Council and from there to the General Assembly. There too, however, the result is not certain and there is much confusion. In sum, in the meantime Hammarskjöld should be given the opportunity to prove his success and the next step will be to take it to the Security Council.

Notes

1. In advance of this meeting the M.F.A. sent Eban instructions, the crux of which was as follows: with regard to Lebanon, the United States should make a final decision

that it is in its interest to prevent compromise with Nasser, using every means at its disposal. With regard to water, he should demand a commitment for financial assistance to Israel to carry out the Jordan project parallel to the assistance received by Jordan for its irrigation scheme. It was left to his discretion whether to raise the attitude of United States to the presence of embassies in Jerusalem. (See the M.F.A. to Eban, TNW504, 29 June 1958, 130.09/2312/1.)

2. In a meeting with Rountree on 20 June, Eban raised the Israeli purchase requests. The former promised to look into the items that had not yet been approved (see Eban to the M.F.A., W859, 20 June 1958, 130.09/2312/7).
3. See No. 201 and n. 5 there.
4. In response to the congratulations that Ben-Gurion had sent de Gaulle on his return to the premiership, the latter emphasized his country's good relations with Israel; see No. 272.
5. On this affair see chapter 3.
6. See No. 204, n. 3.
7. See No. 198, n. 3.

206. D. Ben-Gurion to A. Eban (Washington). 29 July 1958

Copy: IMDEA 230/72.892

Ben-Gurion objects to the proposal of the secretary of state to impose an arms embargo on the Middle East. If such an embargo is imposed, arms will still continue to flow to Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan and to the American troops in Lebanon and the British forces in Jordan, arms that in the end will fall into Nasser's possession. The Soviet Union will continue to send arms openly and clandestinely to the United Arab Republic and in practice the embargo will be imposed only on Israel. This idea is not in keeping with the undertakings the secretary of state has made to examine Israel's requests for arms[1] and the statement of the president expressing the concern of the United States for Israel's security.[2,4]

Notes

1. This was said in a meeting with Eban on 23 July; see No. 23.
2. As was stated in Eisenhower's message to Ben-Gurion, dated 25 July (No. 31).
3. Ben-Gurion's message to President Eisenhower, dated 24 July 1958 (No. 212). For Eisenhower's reply, see No. 31.
4. Eban replied that he was not aware that there was any American proposal for an embargo. On 2 August, in fact, Rountree told Eban that there was no basis for one (see No. 40). Eban added that there was a Soviet proposal for a general embargo and an American reaction that it would not agree to any limitations in Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. (See Eban to Ben-Gurion, W106, 31 July 1958, 130.09/2313/5.)

207. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 August 1958

Coded Tel. W160; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

Eban reports to the ministry, to Ben-Gurion and the chief of General Staff (of the Israel Defence Forces) on his meeting at the Pentagon. Shimon Peres also participated. He met with Sprague, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and with his assistant, Admiral Bergin [spelling not clear]. They had a discussion on general matters, especially on the situation in the Middle East. Peres stated that there was a tendency in the West to over estimate Nasser's power and to under estimate the evil of his intentions. In fact, his power is less than thought and his intentions are worse. He proposed a tripartite program: reinforcement of non-Arab forces in the Middle East, limiting Nasser's power to Egypt itself, and backing the internal forces opposing him in Egypt.

In the American's reaction they expressed complete conceptual agreement with Israel and a more consistent line in the policy of the United States in the Middle East.

Peres raised the question of the Israeli contribution to joint scientific research. They expressed interest and asked for details. Sprague said he will take up the issue with the State Department and suggests that the Israelis also approach the State Department. Eban infers from this that the Pentagon is prepared for close cooperation with Israel in this field.

They stated that they will examine Israel's requests for arms, but the decision will be taken by the secretary of state.[3]

Notes

1. No. 27.
2. Nos. 33 and 37.
3. Peres raised the issue of arms supplies at the State Department as well. He was told that the American policy of not being the principal arms supplier to Israel had not changed, although in light of the situation they were prepared for "modifications" that were not far-reaching. (See Peres to the minister of defence and others, IQ197, 6 August 1958, 130.09/2314/11.)

208. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 11 August 1958

Coded Tel. W182; Inc.: 130.09/2313/5

This morning Eban asked Berry about his promise.[1] He replied that he has tried to get the resolution passed but there has been a demand that a decision in principle be taken, and it is difficult to obtain the secretary of state's agreement as he is not interested in anything except the U.N. Emergency Session.[2] He promised to continue to press. Eban has discussed the matter with Rountree, who could add nothing to what Berry told him. They are trying to use public pressure and arrange applications to the secretary of state and the president via Congress and trying to activate George Meany[3] without publicity for the present.

Notes

1. In this telegram Herzog reported that Berry had promised to suggest to the secretary of state that the United States immediately grant Israel some significant arms as a first indication of a favourable response in the wake of the announcement by the secretary to the prime minister, and that the rest be considered during the next two weeks. Herzog asked that recoilless guns be provided to Israel at once. (The telegram, dated 7 August 1958, is in File 130.09/2313/5.)
2. On the emergency session of United Nations General Assembly to consider the crisis in the Middle East, see No. 55 (Editorial Note).
3. George Meany, the president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

209. G. Avner (Jerusalem) to J. Herzog (Washington). 12 August 1958

Copy: 130.23/3088/6II

Avner writes about the crisis in relations between Israel and the United States following the overflights episode.[1] He fears that even its solution the crisis will leave a scar. He has had a difficult meeting with Baxter on the affair; the latter claims that the flights had in fact been a first step towards cooperation between the two countries, and yet when the time came to put it into action, Israel drew back. He replied that the entire matter is only an excuse, and anyway he does not believe that Israel will receive the guarantees it has requested nor the military cooperation. He asks Herzog's

opinion on this matter and on the inclination of the State Department in the case of an insurrection in Jordan that would bring about a pro-Nasserist regime. They are aware that Israel wants to advance up to the Jordan River and would consider the Jordan a more stable frontier, even from the point of view of the West. is this correct?[5]

Notes

1. On this affair, see Nos. 42-44.
2. See No. 53.
3. William Baxter, counsellor at the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv until October 1959.
4. On the night of 11/12 December 1955, I.D.F. units attacked Syrian outposts on the northeastern edge of the Lake Tiberias, in response to Syrian attacks on fishing boats on the lake. About 50 Syrian soldiers and six Israeli soldiers were killed. World opinion judged the Israeli response to be excessive; this provided the United States with an excuse for suspending the discussions of Israel's request for arms.
5. For Herzog's reply, see No. 212.

210. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 August 1958

Coded Tel. NWT949; Inc.: 130.09/2339/9

Eban reports on a meeting with Dulles that lasted 40 minutes.

Dulles began by talking about the Emergency session.[1] He explained that the economic organization advocated by the U.S. president in his speech[2] is not intended to replace bilateral agreements, which the United States sees as the most efficient, but rather has been designed to contribute toward cooperation if the Arabs so desire. This would not affect the individual projects of Israel, Turkey, etc. The section on arms was designed to forestall the Soviet move for an embargo. The entire matter is unattainable and was introduced only for the sake of effect. In reply to Eban's question, he said that the United Nations stand-by force would be at the disposal of any country in the Middle East, both Arab and non-Arab, in case of danger. The issue of the integrity of the countries of the Middle East, which Eban had also raised, would find its expression in the final resolution of the Assembly.

They moved on to the supply of arms to Israel. Eban stated that Israel will continue to rely on France to supply planes and will request submarines from Britain, which has also given an undertaking in principle to supply

them. The urgent request to the United States is for the supply of tanks, electronic equipment, and especially anti-tank weapons. Dulles listened attentively, and Eban will follow-up in the course of the next few days.[7]

Regarding Israel's requests for guarantees. Eban spoke about the minister of foreign affairs' talks in London.[8] The exchange of letters between Dulles and the prime minister[9] reveals that Dulles is convinced that the United States will come to Israel's aid in time of need, but the prime minister does not have the feeling that this policy has been given definitive and distinct expression. Thus he has requested that the matter be taken up with Lloyd and that he make a supreme effort to attain a clear guarantee for any country wishing to maintain its independence and integrity.

Notes

1. On the emergency session of United Nations General Assembly on the Lebanese crisis, see No. 55 (Editorial Note).
2. On 8 August, President Eisenhower spoke at the opening of the emergency session of the General Assembly dealing with the crisis in the Middle East. He outlined a plan for establishing peace in the Middle East, based on the following six points: (1) the United Nations' concern at the situation in Lebanon; (2) steps by the U.N. to keep the peace in Jordan; (3) putting an end to external incitement to civil war; (4) the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping force; (5) the elaboration of a regional economic plan to assist and accelerate the development of the living conditions of the Arab peoples; (6) steps to prevent a new arms race in the region.
3. The draft was submitted by Japan on 21 July 1958, during the Security Council debates on the crisis in the Middle East, but was killed by a Soviet veto.
4. No. 37.
5. At a meeting between Eban and Dulles on 21 July (see No. 21), it was agreed that Israel would submit a list of the weapons in which it was interested (see the report on the meeting, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 29, pp. 67-72). The list, submitted on 1 August 1958, included the following items: anti-aircraft missiles, tanks, (anti-tank) recoilless guns, half-tracks, pocket submarines, helicopters, transport planes, communications equipment, and trucks. The Israelis noted that recoilless guns were the priority item. (See ibid., No. 37, pp. 88-91.)
6. See No. 207.
7. On 15 August 1958, Eban reported that Rountree had said that the State Department was holding discussions with the Pentagon and that "in the near future there would be a communication from the State Department to us" (see Eban to the M.F.A., NWT957, 15 August 1958, 130.09/2339/9). On 23 August, Rountree notified Herzog that he still had no answer (see Herzog to the M.F.A., NWT957, 15 August 1958, 130.09/2339/9). From published American documents, however, it is evident that on 22 August a memorandum about the Israeli request for weapons was drafted in the State Department. It stated that military aid to Israel would have a harmful effect on the United States' diplomatic relations with countries of the region; at the same time, Israel's support during the crisis in the Middle East and promises made by

Dulles as a result did constitute a change in the situation. It was accordingly recommended to approve the supply of 100 recoilless guns (of the 350 requested by Israel), as well as licences to purchase half-tracks, trucks, and communications equipment from private companies. The request for missiles, tanks, and submarines should be turned down. These recommendations were approved by Dulles (*FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 37, pp. 88-91), as Eban was informed on 26 August; see No. 213, n. 1.

8. The minutes of the meeting on 11 August 1958 are in File 130.23/3098/5.
9. Nos. 49 and 53.
10. On 28-29 July 1958, the Council of Ministers of the Baghdad Pact met in London. Secretary of State Dulles was present as an observer. Instead of joining the Baghdad Pact, the United States signed bilateral agreements with Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, whereby it committed itself to cooperate with them in defence and security matters.
11. Israel asked the United States to inform Iran, Turkey, and Ethiopia that it supported Israel's efforts to improve its relations with these three countries. The United States responded favourably to this request; see No. 431.

211. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 14 August 1958

Coded Tel. TNW638; Outg.: 130.09/2339/7

Ben-Gurion instructs Eban to exploit the joint presence of Lloyd and Dulles at the Assembly to press for a specific guarantee of Israel's integrity. In the letters from the president and Dulles there is avoidance of any specific undertaking in this matter.[1]

Note

1. Eban raised the issue of the guarantee in a conversation with Dulles even before receiving the telegram from Ben-Gurion (see No. 209). In his reply to Ben-Gurion (X282, 14 August 1958, 130.09/2334/4) he wrote that he would speak with Dulles again; however, no report on such a meeting has been located and it is not clear whether it ever took place. Eban met with Lloyd on 16 August; from his report it seems that the point that particularly interested the latter was Eban's statement that an exchange of remarks between the United States and Israel that did not reach the ears of Nasser and the Soviet Union was inadequate. In any case, Lloyd promised to investigate the options with Dulles. (See M.F.A. to Elath, 451, 19 August 1958, 130.09/2322/1.)

212. J. Herzog (Washington) to G. Avner (Jerusalem). 21 August 1958

Orig.: 130.23/30886II

Herzog replies to Avner's letter[1] regarding the crisis in relations between Israel and the United States arising from the Soviet Note and the cessation of overflights. The crisis has left no long-term ill-feeling and the negative impression has been obfuscated by the prime minister's letter to Dulles,[2] the resumption of the flights, and the postponement of the reply to the Soviets. At the same time he does not accept that Israel has gained from this episode and it is a pity it had happened; in the long-run a few valuable days were lost at the height of an important campaign that Israel had initiated. Thus, Israel cannot escape self-criticism in this episode; aid cannot be expected without responding to U.S. requests, without considering U.S. sensitivities, and without following a clear and consistent line.

Notes

1. See No. 209.
2. No. 49.
3. A note jotted in the margin of this paragraph: "Herzog is right P[inhas Eliav]."
4. No. 37.

213. J. Herzog (Washington) to G. Avner (Jerusalem). 29 August 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3089/12

Herzog reports that at long last there are signs of results in Israel's request for arms, and the Americans have for the first time taken a decision to supply a shooting weapon.[1] Following the approval of recoilless guns, Israel will seek tanks and the increase of credit to enable it to purchase arms from civilian firms in keeping with the undertaking of the State Department.[2] This is not a great achievement, but it is a beginning and is important as a matter of principle.[3]

Notes

1. The reference is to Eban's meeting with Rountree on 26 August, at which the latter notified him of the American consent to provide Israel with 100 recoilless guns. No report on this meeting has been found in M.F.A. files; but see *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 37, p. 91, n. 8.
2. See the recommendation by the State Department to Dulles, No. 210, n. 7.
3. Avner replied with a congratulatory message "well done"; see his letter to Herzog, 2 September 1958, 130.23/3089/12.

214. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 10 September 1958

Coded Tel. TNW687; Outg.: 130.09/2312/11

The Division reports on the meeting of the minister of foreign affairs with Lawson. She expressed her appreciation for the release of 100 recoilless guns,[1] but said this was not sufficient. Israel is the only state that does not possess heavy tanks. France is willing to transfer 200 American tanks from surplus equipment, but requires American approval. Israel prefers these tanks rather than British Centurions. The 100 guns approved are not sufficient and more are required. These are modest requests and it cannot be claimed that Israel has exaggerated in this matter. It also requires financial assistance to purchase arms outside the United States. Nasser has not ceased his aggression and a further Note has been received from the Soviet Union.[2] Only the strengthening of Israel can serve as a deterrent and contribute to tranquillity in the Middle East. Lawson promised to convey promptly the contents of this conversation to Washington, in anticipation of Eban's meeting with Dulles.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 213.
2. See No. 355.
3. J. Narayan, an important Socialist leader in India.
4. See No. 215.

215. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 September 1958

Coded Tel. W313; Inc.: 130.09/2313/6

Eban reports on his meeting with Dulles. After a short conversation on the crisis in the Far East[1] they moved on to matters concerning the Middle East. Eban stated that Nasser's recent restraint is only tactical. The American forces in Lebanon, the situation in Jordan, the difficulties he is having in Sudan and Syria, and Saudi restraint, are forcing him to maintain a semblance of tranquillity pending less turbulent times. In the meantime, he is trying to consolidate his position, as for example in Iraq, which he has forced to become dependent on Soviet arms, or Tunisia and Morocco, which he is trying to convince to join the Arab League.[2] The conclusions that should be reached jointly by Israel and the United States are as follows:

1) Reinforcing those peripheral states prepared to stand up to Nasser.
2) A firm stand by the West in Lebanon and Jordan; the strengthening of Israel.

On the latter, Eban raised the issue of the supply of arms: the supply of tanks from France with United States support, increase in the number of recoilless guns, financial assistance, and the preparation of a memorandum to Rountree on other requirements, such as helicopters, electronic equipment, etc. The matter of economic aid to Israel was also discussed and Eban expressed the hope that the level of aid granted in the previous fiscal year would be maintained, with the addition of assistance for the Jordan River project which Israel needed to develop urgently.[5]

Dulles's reply, and the discussion between them appears in the Main Volume, pp. 377-379.

Notes

1. The reference is to the tension that resulted from the shelling by forces of the People's Republic of China of the island of Quemoy, which was controlled by the Republic of China (Taiwan), in September 1958.
2. These two countries did join the Arab league on 1 October 1958.
3. The resolution by the emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly on the crisis in the Middle East; see No. 55.
4. See No. 214.
5. In advance of this meeting Eshkol cabled Eban as follows: "In your meeting today with the secretary make every effort to make him aware that starting this year we need to invest 30 million Israel pounds annually to develop the waters of the Jordan. If we do not begin this year it will be a serious blow to the entire economy of the

country and to the consolidation of those who founded new agricultural settlements in recent years. (See Eshkol to Eban, TNW685, 10 September 1958, 130.09/2312/11.) In addition to what was stated here, Eban also raised the issue with Dillon. It was agreed that Israel would soon make suggestions about all the assistance items and a more detailed discussion would then take place. (See Eban to the M.F.A., W321, 11 September 1958, 130.09/2313/6.) See also No. 218.

6. Between 27 August and 12 September 1958, Hammarskjöld visited Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Baghdad, and Jerusalem as a first step in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution of 21 August that requested the secretary-general, in consultation with the governments concerned and in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to make such practical arrangements to help implement the principles of the Charter with regard to Lebanon and Jordan and to facilitate the early evacuation of foreign troops from these two countries.
7. Not located.

216. Meeting: G. Meir–J.F. Dulles (New York, 2 October 1958)

Notes

1. See No. 37.
2. Following this talk the British agreed to supply Israel with 55 Centurion tanks–see No. 306, n.2.

217. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 October 1958

Coded Tel. W390; Inc.: 130.09/2313/6

Eban reports on his meeting with Rountree who informed him that the United States has agreed as follows:[1]

1) To release 100 recoilless guns with special credit arrangements.[2]

2) To grant permits for the purchase of as many half-tracks and electronic equipment as Israel requires, and to release trucks.

3) To make available 60 anti-aircraft guns and Browning machine guns.

4) To release 20 helicopters as soon as Israel provides the military configuration it requires.

5) To permit the British to sell Israel 55 Centurion tanks.[3]

Eban expressed the government of Israel's appreciation and raised the problem of finance. Rountree replied that the United States prefers not to

provide direct finance for the purchase of arms, but will take this into consideration when determining the extent of economic aid to be supplied to Israel.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 210.
2. See No. 213.
3. On the British aspect of the affair, see Nos. 306 and 312.
4. See No. 218.

218. A Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 October 1958

Coded Tel. W391; Inc.: 130.09/2313/6

Eban continues his report on his meeting with Rountree, in which, in addition to the matter of arms, financial aid was discussed.[1]

Regarding Special Assistance,[2] there is no possibility of exceeding the sum of $9.5 million granted for the previous year.

There is a possibility of increased of assistance from the Development Loan Fund in keeping with Israel's requests, but this will have to wait for Dillon.[3]

In the framework of the surplus food program, there are various possibilities of assistance such as an increase in the portion paid for in local currency and increasing the inclusive amount to $38 million. All this is dependent upon the agreement of the secretary of agriculture.

Notes

1. See No. 217.
2. "Special assistance" is the term for a cash grant that does not have to be repaid.
3. A loan through the Development Loan Fund.

219. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in London, Paris, Rome and Ankara. 4 November 1958

Coded Tel. 299; Outg.: 130.09/2378/8

The ministry reports to the ambassadors on the interview the prime minister has given to the *Sunday Times* and the Note received from the United States on this matter.[1] At a meeting with Baxter of the American embassy, the foreign minister denied rumors of mobilization of Israeli troops and plans to carry out military action in Jordan. Israel wishes to maintain the status quo and change will come only if an initiative is taken by the other side. Demilitarization of the West Bank is the most desirable solution. The minister put forward the assumption that behind the exaggerated sensitivity is Egypt's intention to take action in Jordan, exploiting the absence of the king on holiday. A second possibility is that the Soviet Union wants to appear as the saviour of the Arabs. The minister stated that she has summoned the Soviet ambassador to discuss the matter[3] and the prime minister is due to reply to a parliamentary question in the Knesset.[4] She asked whether the Americans have information on the situation in Jordan. Baxter replied that the Americans are cautiously optimistic about the situation even if the king does go on holiday. There are signs of weakening of the opposition even if Rifa'i is not popular in Jordan.

Notes

1. On 26 October, the *Sunday Times* (London) published an interview with Ben-Gurion. The prime minister said that it was necessary to prevent the entry of foreign forces into Egypt or of the Iraqis into the West Bank. Should the political situation in Jordan change, the United Nations must guarantee and supervise the demilitarization of the West Bank. He also emphasized the need for Great Power guarantees of Israel's present borders and asked that the United Nations and the Government of Jordan implement Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement. Dulles's Note, dated 31 October, is printed in full in *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 45, p. 106; the draft reply, composed by Comay, noted that Israel could not dismiss lightly the provocatory Egyptian propaganda, which was supported by the Soviets, even though the Egyptians knew that their allegations were devoid of substance. Accordingly Israel believed that it would be helpful for the United States and United Nations to make it clear that such behaviour was incompatible with the U.N. resolution of 21 August, to which Dulles referred. Golda Meir, who saw the draft before it was sent, expressed reservations about involving the U.N. in the affair. See the draft, 4 November 1958, 130.23/3089/10. The Israeli reply, in its final wording (not found in the M.F.A. files) was handed to the secretary of state when he met with Eban on 23 November; see No. 222.

2. The resolution by the emergency session of the General Assembly on the crisis in Lebanon; see No. 55.
3. For a report on this meeting, in which the ambassador evaded giving a pertinent answer and promised to report to his government, see Ministry Bulletin 303 to Israel missions abroad, 130.09/2378/8.
4. On 3 November 1958 Ben-Gurion replied to parliamentary interpellations on the subject. With regard to the Soviet Union he said that it had all the means to know what was going on in Israel; it was inconceivable that its government did not know that the anti-Israel lies and fabrications that appeared in the Soviet press from time to time were totally unfounded. As for Egypt, the ruling military junta evidently believed that the campaign of lies against Israel would be of benefit to the campaigns of subversion it was conducting in all Arab countries. (See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Fourth Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXV, p. 147.)

220. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 November 1958

Coded Tel. W474; Inc.: 130.09/2313/7

Following the exchanges between the United States and Israel regarding the future of Jordan, Herzog raises the possibility of sending a note to the United States stating that Israel concurs with the secretary of state's statement against any change of the status quo in that country. However, in the light of its sensitive status, if the regime were to fall, Israel would take action in accordance with the prime minister's statement in the interview published in the *Sunday Times*.[5] In the Note, Israel should ask for the secretary of state's reaction and after receiving it, Eban should request a meeting to discuss its content. The secretary could either ignore the matter or state that he was unable to respond to a hypothetical situation. In either case, Israel's status would not be adversely effected, because it could argue that it had stated its concern, requested consultation, and that its request had been rejected. Such an approach could serve as a basis for the continuation of discussions on strengthening Israel with arms and economic aid. Only if the secretary of state's reply is absolutely negative–that the United States objected to Israeli action in any circumstances–Israel's actions would be restricted. However, it is doubtful that such a reply will be forthcoming.

Notes

1. Eban that time was in Israel for consultations.
2. In a meeting that Dulles held with Eban and Shiloah in London on 27 July 1958; see No. 29, n. 6.
3. See Herzog to the M.F.A., W410, 27 October 1958, 130.09/2313/6.
4. See No. 219.
5. See ibid., n. 1.

221. D. Ben-Gurion to J. Herzog (Washington). 11 November 1958

Coded Tel.; Outg.: IMDEA 230.72/894

Ben-Gurion cables concerning the steps being taken by Herzog regarding Israel's possible reaction in the event of the fall of Jordan. In the course of his discussions, he should stress that in addition to its demand for demilitarization of the West Bank, Israel will not allow the Old City of Jerusalem to fall to Nasser, because of the holy places there, and because of its demand for the right of access to the Western Wall. Furthermore, Israel cannot allow Nasser to gain control of Mt. Scopus or the roads leading to it.

Note

1. No. 220.

222. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 November 1958

Coded Tel. W520; Inc.: 130.09/2313/7

Eban reports on his comprehensive meeting with Dulles after his return from consultations in Israel. Eban first gave the Government of Israel's response to the United States' message concerning the supposed threat by Israel against Jordan.[1] He stressed Israel's desire to maintain the status quo, as stated in the last sentence in its Note. He also conveyed the prime minister's position on the demilitarization of the West Bank, Article VIII and said that Israel cannot allow Nasser to gain control of the West Bank or the Old City of Jerusalem.[2]

He then moved on to a review of developments in the Middle East, referring specifically to United States' policy in the region. Following events during the summer, there is an increased willingness among the countries in the region to resist Nasser's imperialist ambitions. A further positive development is the links being forged between Israel and the countries of Africa and Asia.

He ended by raising Israel's need for economic aid and requested the secretary of state's intervention with the Development Loan Fund with the purpose of arranging a more extensive plan that would provide sufficient funds for the purchase of arms. He also spoke about the Jordan River project and stated that Israel will in the near future submit a work plan and request for financial aid.

The secretary of state commented: He agreed that there is an improvement in the situation in the Middle East. The dominant line of the Americans is to come to the aid of any victim of aggression; there is no policy of "pick and choose"—Israel is eligible like every other state. Regarding requests for aid, he mentioned the concessions regarding surplus food supplies.[7] As for the Development Loan Fund, he outlined the difficulties and the pressure of requests, but said that the government hopes to obtain a further allocation. He touched on the matter of immigration, and asked about future plans, mentioning the complaints contained in Arab propaganda of Israel's inevitable expansion. Eban gave appropriate explanations.

Notes

1. See No. 219 and n. 1 there.
2. See No. 221.
3. The reference is to a meeting between Dulles and Meir and Eban on 2 October 1958; see No. 216. The two raised the issue of the heavy financial burden that its security needs laid on Israel. They asked whether Israel could expect that this would be taken into account by American assistance programs in the future.
4. See, for example, the meeting between Eban and Rountree on 20 June, at which the latter, replying to Eban, said that were the embassy to submit a request associated with the Jordan River project when it requested assistance according to the D.L.F. plan, they would examine the proposal when formulated and submitted. (See Eban to the M.F.A., W859, 20 June 1958, 130.09/2312/7.)
5. See No. 67.
6. On 17 November 1958 there was a military coup in the Sudan. The leader, Gen. Ibrahim Abbud, named himself president and prime minister, dissolved political parties, and banned all political activity.
7. The reference is to the American decision to increase economic assistance to Israel so that it could purchase tanks from Great Britain; see No. 217.

8. In February 1958 the Export-Import Bank approved a loan of $24.2 million to Israel for its water projects, except for the Jordan project; see No. 59.

223. Staff meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 1 December 1958)[1]

Copy: 130.02/4315/2

The meeting was held to hear a review by Eban, who is in Israel for consultations of the state of Israel–United States relations. Eban described the situation as recovery from the damage to mutual relations sustained during the Suez Campaign period. It has consisted of two stages: The first stage of this recovery, prior to the Iraq episode, was mainly a return to the status quo ante, and the focus of improvement was the issue of free passage for shipping in the Gulf of Eilat, the maintenance of quiet in the Gaza strip, and improvement in mutual consultation. The second stage came in the wake of disappointment with the pro-Arab front, the central pillar of which was Iraq. This has been expressed by the willingness of the United States to use force against any attempt to change the status quo by violent means. Ongoing consultations are being held with the Americans, relating to four main issues: economic aid, strengthening ties between Israel and the peripheral states, reinforcing Israel's military forces and United States responsibility in the case of aggression against Israel. There is progress in all of these issues, even though in none of them has Israel attained full satisfaction.

In the discussion following Eban's presentation, the central question was whether to request the United States to supply arms free of charge, even though this would necessitate receiving a military mission in Israel. The minister of foreign affairs stated that the matter would be examined.[3]

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 4 November 1958, when Eban was in Israel for consultations.
2. See No. 210 and n. 5 there.
3. In a meeting at the M.F.A. on 19 December 1958 it was agreed not to request non-reimbursable military assistance; see No. 225.

224. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the Israel Embassy in Washington. 13 December 1958

Coded Tel. TNW906; Inc.: 130.09/2339/28

The minister of foreign affairs has met with Baxter concerning the incidents in the north. Baxter explained that the American communication[1] was not based on reports from the United States embassy in Israel, which is aware that there has been no Israeli mobilization or other preparations, but rather was prompted by the nervousness felt by Israel's neighbours. The minister expressed her feeling of disappointment at the communication and the lukewarm reaction of the United States to the incidents in the north and to Israel's application to the Security Council.[2,3] She is unable to understand why they have to wait for the report from Rountree in Jordan, and what his connection is to a violent incident in which the U.A.R. had shelled kibbutzim along a 17 km. strip of the border on 3 December. Israel has complained to the United Nations in the hope that the Security Council will act as it should. However, the situation is not encouraging. The United States is vacillating, and the Von Horn report confused a number of issues unconnected with the Syrian attack. The minister also touched on the question of the supply of arms and of financing them, and pointed out that Israel had not been permitted to purchase tanks in the United States nor in France. The financing of purchases in Britain is difficult, while the Arabs have no difficulty in obtaining arms and financing them. If the United States does not act forcefully to prevent such attacks, the situation will deteriorate. Baxter replied that he would cable immediately.

Notes

1. This communication, which came in the wake of the serious incidents on the Israel-Syria border that began on the December 1958 (see Nos. 164 and 165), presents the State Department's assumption that Israel would bring the matter to the United Nations and not take actions that the United States could not support. (See the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNW905, 12 December 1958, 130.09/2312/11; for an English version of the communication, see *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 55, pp. 127-28.) A similar message was conveyed to the United Arab Republic.
2. In the same conversation, on 11 December, Meroz asked the State Department officials to speed up the Security Council debate about the incident. The Americans replied that it would be better to allow the Council members more time to study the facts; otherwise, Israel was likely to find itself isolated. Rountree, they added, was on his way to Jordanian Jerusalem and they were waiting for his report to complete the

material in their hands. (See Meroz the M.F.A., 11 December 1958, 130.09/2314/7.) In December 1958 Rountree made a working visit to Arab capitals in the Middle East, while skipping Israel.

3. To Israel's disappointment, the Security Council did not pass any resolution and made do with a lukewarm summary of the debate; see No. 165.

225. G. Avner (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 21 December 1958

Copy: 130.23/3088/6

Avner reports on the meeting held with the participation of the prime minister, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of finance and senior officials, on the plan of action to be carried out in the United States in the coming months. Following are the conclusions arising out of this meeting:

1) No public or diplomatic effort will be made to obtain free military aid because this would require accepting a military mission in Israel.

2) The American statements that they would come to the aid of Israel if it were attacked are important, but are ambiguous in that they refer to Communist aggression, and the U.A.R. has not yet been defined as a Communist state. Furthermore, American emergency assistance could arrive too late. Thus, there is no point in wasting energy in firming up these undertakings, but rather energy should be invested in obtaining modern arms and military equipment, and especially planes and tanks. At the same time, it should be stated clearly to the U.S. Administration that Israel has no interest in additional territory, but rather in additional Jews. All this should be explained to the United States public and to the government, stressing the value of Israel as a barrier to Nasser and Communism, and as an asset to democracy in the world in general.

3) In the area of finance, attempts should be made to obtain those amounts specified by the Ministry of Finance, among others, additional credit from the Export and Import Bank, a monetary grant for the Jordan River project and monies from American Jewry, including private investments.

Note

1. The visit took place in March 1959. Meir took advantage of it to hold political talks in Washington as well; see No. 232.

226. D. Ben-Gurion to J.F. Dulles (Washington). 19 January 1959

Notes

1. No. 27.
2. No. 37.
3. For Dulles's reply, see No. 228.

227. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 19 January 1959

Coded Tel. W661; Inc.: 130.09/2313/7

Eban reports on his meeting with Dulles. Dulles told him about his meeting with Mikoyan[1] in which they also discussed the situation in the Middle East. Mikoyan had recalled that he had once proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union should cooperate in the Middle East. Dulles had replied that because of the general and wide-ranging character of the proposal it was not practicable, that is, that it was difficult to talk about wide-ranging cooperation from Pakistan to Morocco. Mikoyan had replied that the intended application was to the "Arab complex", including Persia and Turkey. Dulles understood from this that the suggestion was the old proposal of an embargo, and he had exploited the opportunity to make it clear to the Russian that the United States was determined to reinforce those countries subject to threat and to maintain the Eisenhower Doctrine. Mikoyan had listened but did not react.

Eban took advantage of the mention of the issue of Iraq[2] to put forward Israel's viewpoint on this. He stressed that the source of trouble is Nasser, and that the problem of Iraq, with all its severity, should not be the cause of a change in the West's appraisal of Nasserism. It is Nasser who has opened the Middle East to Communist penetration, but despite this, there is of late a movement in the West toward Nasser and agreements are being made with him, and this strengthens his ability to make mischief in the region.

Dulles replied that he concurs with Eban's appraisal and that the United States is aware of the complexity of the situation. The policy of the United States has not changed and it continues to oppose Nasser's activities outside his country. The situation in Iraq is complicated. If it became a truly Communist country, there would be a change in the map of the Middle East. The United States advocates maintaining an independent Iraq against

Nasser on the one hand and against the Soviet Union on the other. Eban replied that there is little difference between a Nasserist or Communist Iraq, and the maintenance of an independent state seemed to him to be the best possible solution. Dulles did not object to this argument, but Eban came away with the impression that for him the vision of a communist Iraq is much worse.

At the end of the meeting, Eban raised the matter of Israel's needs in connection with the water project. He mentioned the American support for the Yarmuk project as an additional factor in support of Israel's request. It was decided that Eban would submit Israel's request to the State Department.

Notes

1. Anastas Mikoyan, deputy prime minister of the Soviet Union, visited the United States in January 1959.
2. Shortly after the coup in Iraq in July 1958 it became evident that the new ruler, Qassim, intended to preserve Iraqi independence and had no intention of becoming a satellite of Nasser. Accordingly, Nasserists in Iraq began to engage in subversive activities against Qassim. The latter reacted by moving closer to Communist circles in Iraq, which were also opposed to Nasser. The Communists' increased influence in Iraq was a source of concern for the West.
3. The reference is to a Note that Bulganin sent to the heads of government of the NATO countries, in which he proposed a summit conference within the next two or three months. Among the items for the agenda was a settlement in the Middle East, whereby the powers would take no steps that would infringe upon the independence of the countries of the region, would waive the use of force to settle problems in the region, reject any external intervention in the domestic affairs of the countries of the region, and would help reinforce the sovereignty and national independence of the countries of the Middle East.
4. On 22 December 1958 a communiqué was published in Cairo that the Soviet Union had agreed to assist a number of projects in the Egyptian province of the United Arab Republic, including the construction of five airfields, factories, and a power plant in Suez City. On 28 December the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic signed a cooperation agreement for the first stage of construction of the Aswan High Dam. The Soviet Union promised to provide the required credits and to dispatch engineers, experts, and technicians, who would use mainly Soviet equipment. Earlier West German companies had offered credit of DM200 million for construction of the dam. The preference for the Soviets caused displeasure in West Germany.
5. Amintore Fanfani, prime minister and foreign minister of Italy from July 1958 to January 1959, visited Cairo in January 1959; see No. 326.
6. The Note on this matter was submitted to the State Department on 28 January 1959; see No. 67.

228. J.F. Dulles (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 3 February 1959

Note

1. No. 226.

229. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 February 1959

Coded Tel. TNW5; Outg.: 130.09/2339/29

The minister reports on the announcement by Liberia of the decision to move its embassy from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. In an unofficial discussion the ambassador[1] stated that the decision resulted from constant pressure from the Americans.[3] Eban is instructed to apply to the State Department and to remind them that in the past they have said that they would take action only if they received information that countries were planning to open their embassies in Jerusalem, and Israel's understanding was that pressure would not be brought to bear on countries whose embassies were already situated in Jerusalem.[4] The Minister requests that in the course of his deliberations, Eban should not reveal the source of this information, but should stress that there are no other reasons for the action of the Government of Liberia.

Notes

1. Ernest J. Yancy, the Liberian ambassador in Israel.
2. The letter, dated 22 January 1959, is in File 130.23/3110/23.
3. See Gazit to Meir, 14 July 1957, 130.23/3121/25.
4. See No. 204, n. 3.

230. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 February 1959

Coded Tel. WNT597; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

Eban reports on the reactions of State Department officials to Israel's complaints concerning the pressure brought to bear on the Liberian embassy

to move from Jerusalem.[1] They have expressed their annoyance at the expressions used by the director-general to Lawson;[2] these are hostile, and include designating the Americans as the "policeman of the world". They added: "if it were not for the action of the U.S. against the Assembly's resolutions on Jerusalem the tension over this issue would have been even greater".[3] Two years previously, a *modus vivendi* was reached between Israel and the United States on this issue according to which ambassadors from Western countries would continue to live in Tel Aviv, but would pay regular visits to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem.[4] This is a convenient arrangement and if Israel wishes to change it then this should be done by agreement.

Eban points out that the American complaints are correct and the newspaper articles reveal a lack of knowledge on the question of Jerusalem.[5] As for the argument that there was an agreement in 1955, it is desirable to examine exactly what has been agreed with a view to clarifying the subject. Basically, he does not believe in the prospect of success at renewed discussion of the matter in the light of Liberian anger, and the campaign in the Israeli press.[6,7]

Notes

1. See No. 229.
2. No record of the meeting has been found.
3. In fact the United States, like Israel, opposed the resolution passed on 9 December 1949 at the fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirming the organization's earlier decision to turn Jerusalem into a *corpus separatum*. The two countries also opposed a later draft resolution on Jerusalem that failed to receive the required two-thirds' majority. Nevertheless, the United States believed that U.N. resolutions about Jerusalem should be respected and that accordingly embassies should not be located in the city. (See *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 65, pp. 147-149.)
4. The reference is to an arrangement that took shape in 1954-1955. After the Foreign Ministry was transferred to Jerusalem in July 1953, the ambassadors who lived in Tel Aviv refrained from visiting the ministry, but did call on the prime minister in his office in Jerusalem. When Moshe Sharett served as both prime minister and foreign minister (1954-1955) the problem disappeared; but it resurfaced in late 1955 when Ben-Gurion returned to the premiership. Sharett than proposed the following procedure: when he happened to be in Tel Aviv and the matter was not particularly urgent, he would not trouble the heads of mission to come to Jerusalem and would meet with them in Tel Aviv. In return, the ambassadors would be permitted to visit the foreign minister in his office in Jerusalem. (See Eytan to the Israel embassies in Washington, London, and Paris, 9 November 1955, 130.09/2310/16; *FRUS*, 1955-1957, Vol. XIV, No. 394, pp. 726-27.)
5. On 18 February 1959, *Ha'aretz* published an article under the headline "American

Pressure Caused the Transfer of the Liberian Embassy to Tel Aviv," with the subhead, "Eban Instructed to Raise the Matter in Washington." Inter alia, the article, citing "diplomatic circles", reported that the United States had recently been the main international actor stirring up the Jerusalem issue. The pressure on Liberia, and earlier on Ghana, had not come from the Arabs or the Vatican, but from the United States, and was by way of punishment for the transfer of the capital to Jerusalem. It was clear to the Americans that the presence of this or that embassy in Jerusalem did not change the fact that Jerusalem was the capital of Israel. The American action was also contrary to the basic principle of its foreign policy, that is, not to arouse dormant problems and to work to maintain the status quo.

6. On 18 February 1959, the Liberian embassy in Israel submitted a Note to the M.F.A. in which it denied a report in the *Jerusalem Post* of that day that the transfer of the embassy to Tel Aviv came in response to a request by the United States. (The Note is in File 130.23/3110/23.)
7. Eytan replied to this telegram that he had never said that United States "sees itself as the policeman of the world" and that there had been no *modus vivendi* whereby Israel acquiesced in the location of the Western embassies in Tel Aviv (see his telegram to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNW54, 1 March 1954, 130.09/2312/11).

231. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 February 1959

Coded Tel. WNT598; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

Eban suggests that lessons be learned from the conflict over the Liberian Embassy.[1] It resulted in tension with Liberia, tension with the United States, the hasty removal of the Liberian embassy to Tel Aviv, and pointless public unease. Thus Israel is faced with two alternatives: it can either accept the existing situation or to try to convince one of the large embassies (the United States or France) to move to Jerusalem. In the light of the international situation, the possibility of a radical solution is far off. Therefore, if a move is made toward changing the status quo, care must be taken to ensure the cooperation of a great power.

Note

1. See No. 230.

232. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 March 1959

Coded Tel. WNT619; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

Eban reports on the meeting between the minister of foreign affairs and Herter, together with other officials in the State Department.[1] The minister began with the issue of Israel's water project and asked that Israel's request be dealt with as soon as possible. Herter replied that Israel's request is under consideration but there is a budgetary problem. In a private conversation with Dillon,[2] the latter stated that he supports the plan, and suggested that Israel exert pressure in the Congress. The minister moved on to the issue of the embassies in Jerusalem,[3] and requested that the United States not put pressure on those countries that have decided to open their embassy in Jerusalem. Herter replied that for well-known historical reasons the United States prefers the embassies to be situated in Tel Aviv. The United States expresses this stand when asked for its opinion. But if a country nevertheless decides to open in Jerusalem, the United States does not interfere. They exchanged views on the current situation and the uprising in Iraq,[4] which in Herter's opinion was not spreading, but even if it declines, it still constitutes an increasing dependence of Qassim on the Communists.[5]

Notes

1. Golda Meir took advantage of being in the United States for a lecture tour on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal to meet with Herter.
2. See Nos. 67 and 68.
3. See Nos. 229-231.
4. See No. 227 and n. 2 there.
5. In March 1959 an attempted military coup, centred in Mosul, was put down with Communist help.

233. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 31 March 1959

Coded Tel. W841; Inc.: 130.09/2313/8

Herzog refers to the leaked information from the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives that, according to illustrative figures of American Special Assistance Program for the coming year, as

presented to the Committee, Israel was not included in the special grants. The friends of Israel noticed this and have tried to obtain clarifications. It was explained to them that government representatives are convinced that it is possible to provide for Israel's needs from other sources. Immediately after the matter became known, the embassy supplied appropriate information to some ten members of the Committee on Israel's economic situation and its urgent need for special assistance . Even before the recess a bloc was being organized within the Committee that would not give way, even if this meant confrontation with the Administration. One of them, Senator Fulton,[1] spoke according to the briefing he had received from the embassy. Herzog points out that the reason for the reduction is not clear—whether for a political reason or because of a general cut in the assistance budget.[5]

Notes

1. Representative James Fulton, Republican of Pennsylvania.
2. The International Cooperation Administration.
3. "Special assistance" is the term for a cash grant that does not have to be repaid; see No. 218.
4. In a later telegram Eban provided the background for the special assistance for the fiscal year 1959-1960. According to him, the Administration had requested $225 million "for the entire world" but was unlikely to receive the full amount. Very few countries included in the program received other assistance, such as the D.L.F. and surplus food. Accordingly, whether the intention to direct Israel to other sources was guided this year by political motives for not, the magnitude of the objective difficulties should not be dismissed lightly. (See Eban to the M.F.A., W859, 4 April 1959, 130.09/2313/8.) In reply, the Mrs. Meir instructed him to raise the issue with Herter (see her telegram, dated 6 April 1959, 130.09/2313/1). Eban did so on 23 April; see No. 234.

234. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 April 1959

Coded Tel. WNT669; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

Eban reports on his meeting with Herter. This was apparently the first meeting Herter had held with a foreign ambassador since his appointment as secretary of state.[1]

They began with an exchange of views on the situation in Iraq. In Eban's opinion the situation is grave, but not yet desperate. Qassim could be

pushed unequivocally into the arms of the Communists if he were to gain the impression that the West was supporting Nasser against him. The events of the previous year proved that the Arab countries will take extreme measures to prevent Nasser from dominating them. To Israel's regret, Iraq has turned in an unfortunate direction in its efforts to avoid Nasser's domination and it is therefore incumbent on the West to make every effort to prove to Iraq that the West supports its independence and integrity. Herter replied, with some indifference, that he too was of the opinion that a state of crises has not been reached.

Eban moved on to issues concerning Israel and the United States. He spoke of the grant referred to in his memorandum[3] and the water project. The latter is not a particularly complicated matter from the political and practical points of view. Israel has punctiliously left out issues which are politically contentious and is not requesting that the United States carry out the work on its behalf, as is the case in Jordan. All Israel requires is financial aid and equipment.

In his reply, Herter stressed that there is no political implication regarding the issue of the grant.[5] He expanded on the matter of the water project. He asked what is the link between the Israeli plan and the Johnston Plan, and if the work that Israel wishes to carry out would in the future assist implementation of the Johnston Plan, if it is decided to revive it, or would the monies be wasted. Eban explained that the work Israel is carrying out is along the lines of the Johnston Plan, that it is no more expensive, and that it reserves the possibility of changing the plan in the future.

Notes

1. Herter replaced Dulles as Secretary of State in April 1959.
2. The message has not been found, but it must have conveyed congratulations on his appointment.
3. See No. 233. A memorandum was drafted in the Israel embassy to demonstrate that there was no substitute for a grant (see Eban to Eytan, W874, 8 April 1959, 130.09/2313/8). The memorandum, which has not been located, was submitted to the State Department on 8 April. (See cover letter, dated 8 April 1959, 130.02/5944/6.)
4. See No. 235.
5. Dillon repeated this to the Senate Foreign Relations committee and emphasized that the United States wished to avoid creating the impression, even on the surface, that its sympathy for Israel had diminished. (See Eban to the M.F.A., W911, 8 May 1959, 130.09/2313/8.)
6. At their meeting on 18 April 1959; see Herzog to Comay, W924, 19 April 1959, ibid.

235. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 April 1959

Coded Tel. WNT670; Inc.: 130.09/2314/8

Eban reports on his discussion with Dillon on the issue of assistance to Israel and plans for the water project. Dillon explained that there are no political implications in the omission of Israel from the framework of special assistance. It is the result of purely economic considerations. The amounts that Israel had lost from the special assistance will be allocated within other frameworks. It is the aim of the United States to assist Israel to achieve economic stability, especially with the ending of the reparations payments.[2] Concerning the water project, he said that only one question remains, and that is whether the work Israel intends to carry out is such that, if it were decided to revive the Johnston Plan, these monies would be wasted. Eban replied that the work Israel is about to carry out would in no way conflict with the Johnston Plan, and if this plan were to be implemented some time in the future, the present works would be integrated into it.

Notes

1. Reference is to Public Law 480 enabling the U.S. to extend aid in the form of surplus food.
2 The reparations agreement was due to expire in 1962, and the last goods to arrive in Israel in March 1963.
3. Dempster McIntosh, the director of the D.L.F. No record of the conversation has been found.

236. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 28 April 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3088/7

Eban refers to the memorandum from the United States Division of 6 April titled "Difficulties in relations between Israel and the United States."[1] He disagrees with the line expressed in the memorandum and the tone of the controversy in the Israeli press. As far as he is aware, since the establishment of the State of Israel, there have been no more than three conflicts between Israel and the United States that can be termed basic conflicts. The first was

in summer 1949, when the United States demanded that Israel cede territory and allow the refugees to return and threatened that if it did not do so, America would change its attitude towards Israel.[2] The second was at the time of the deadlock in the campaign for the provision of arms prior to the Suez Canal operation.[3] The third was in January–February 1957, when the United States demanded complete withdrawal from Sinai. The other controversies with the United States have not endangered the foundations of the sovereignty and integrity of Israel. Thus he relates to them and deals with them as transitory events and not crises that could endanger basic relations.

Thus the description in the Division's memorandum, using expressions such as "change" or "complication" or an American "endeavour to wash its hands of Israel", has no basis whatsoever and is exaggerated. It is based on three events:

1) The comment by the State Department spokesman on the minister of foreign affairs' address in the Knesset.[4,5]
2) The assumption that the United States did not act in Cairo with sufficient vigour to guarantee freedom of shipping for Israel.[6]
3) The so-called ousting of Israel from the framework of recipients of American assistance.[7]

Eban refutes each of these events. The American reaction to the minister of foreign affairs' remarks was inevitable because the reference in the speech to the relations of one friendly state with another (in this case Egypt) required a reaction. The reply of the State Department may have bordered on lack of courtesy. As for freedom of shipping, the United States has not taken action in Cairo and has informed the Egyptians that it will support Israel when the issue comes to the Security Council. As for the special assistance, it would have been better to wait and request an explanation for the change, and indeed when the explanations were forthcoming, it became apparent that this was not a change in policy, but only in the structure of assistance.

Eban concludes by stating that one can expect that any country, even one that respects the sovereignty and integrity of Israel and provides it with extremely valuable assistance, will from time to time take a stand that is not to Israel's liking. It is wrong to become depressed and alarmed in such cases. One must keep one's nerve and no other country needs to maintain strong nerves more than Israel.

Notes

1. According to this memorandum (in File 130.23/3088/7), in recent weeks there had been a spate of incidents in Israeli-American relations that gave cause for concern.

The author of the memorandum wondered whether the common source of these incidents might be a disposition to wash U.S. hands of Israel and on the other hand to exploit them to normalize relations with the United Arab Republic. The incidents referred to were: the reaction of the State Department spokesman to Foreign Minister Meir's Knesset speech in late March (see n. 4 below); the apathy displayed by the United States about the issue of Israeli passage through the Suez Canal; and the Administration's intention to halt special assistance to Israel.

2. See Vol. 4, No. 42.
3. After the major arms deal between Egypt and the Eastern Bloc, in September 1955, Israel asked to purchase arms in United States, but met with a refusal. Only in 1956 did the Administration moderate its position somewhat and remove its opposition to Israeli purchases from its allies. The Americans waived in Israel's favour the 12 Mystère IV planes ordered from France in the context of NATO and allowed the Canadians to sell Israel two Sabre Jet fighters. (See M. Gazit, *Israel's Arms Procurement from the United States* [Hebrew], pp. 19-21.)
4. On 30 March 1959, to mark the submission of the M.F.A. budget, Foreign Minister Meir delivered a political speech in the Knesset, in which she said, "It seems to us that the political developments that have befallen our neighbours during the year under review have created greater proximity in the assessments of regional problems by Israel and the United States. Many circles and American public opinion have come closer to our appraisal of the nature of Nasserism and its subversive trends." (See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Fourth Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXVI, p. 1707.) Reacting to these remarks, the State Department spokesman said that applied only for Israel. As for the United States, it was investing efforts to establish and maintain good relations with all countries of the Middle East, including the United Arab Republic. (See *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 April 1959.)
5. Baxter informed the M.F.A. on 7 April 1959 that the remarks by the State Department spokesman about Meir's Knesset speech had not been motivated by a lack of sympathy for Israel or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but had been intended to prevent misunderstandings based on what had been written in the press about her speech, in light of the sensitivity about such matters. (See the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNW160, 7 April 1959, 130.09/2313/1.)
6. On this affair, see chapter 3.
7. See No. 233.
8. See, for example, an editorial in *Ha'aretz* for 5 April, headed "Cancellation of the U.S. Grant: An Economic or Political Step?" The writer stated, in part: "As long as there is a suspicion that it was indeed political considerations that produced the decision in question, it is incumbent upon us to trumpet in the ears of the United States that this is a discriminatory step against Israel. Such discrimination will cause us political damage that we need not accept, and at the same time will not help United States in the slightest. Abd-ul-Nasser may be counted on to demand, in return for his friendship, a stiffer price than the end of the direct grant to Israel."
9. For Eban's report on the soothing words and explanation he heard from these people, see his telegrams W918, W874, and W930, dated between 8 and 21 April 1959, in File 130.09/2313/8.

237. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 16 May 1959

Coded Tel. WNT677; Inc. 130.09/2314/8

Eban reports on his meeting with Eisenhower on the occasion of his ending his term of office and going into politics in Israel. The meeting was held in private and lasted about half an hour. Eisenhower made some warm farewell remarks. He asked about the political structure in Israel and the electoral system. The discussion then moved on to the international situation, and the president stated that he was frustrated by it. It is difficult to find common ground with the Soviet Union, and the only thing the two powers have in common is the fear of war. They ended the meeting with a discussion on the Middle East and Israel. The president said that he has discerned a certain change in the area, and there seems to be a reduction of hostile tension on the part of the Arabs toward Israel. The feeling of nationalism in the region is extreme and if more interest were taken in development it would be to the benefit of the area. He cited as an example the Syrian rejection of the Johnston Plan. As far as he is able to understand, the Arabs prefer to give up the advantages the project would bring them in order that Israel should not benefit from it.

Eban mentions out that he was most impressed by the alertness and physical fitness of the president. It would appear that he considers the problem with Russia as being hopeless. As for Arab nationalism he spoke on the assumption that there were complexities which could eventually be remedied.

Notes

1. Evidently after receiving the communication from Ben-Gurion; see No. 226.
2. Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion met in Frankfurt in 1945. At the time Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe; Ben-Gurion was the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. They discussed Ben-Gurion's request to allow educational assistance to Jews in the D.P. camps before their immigration to Palestine. Eisenhower approved the request.

   During that same period, Earl G. Harrison, the U.S. representative on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, was dispatched by President Truman to investigate the situation of the Jewish D.P.s in Europe. His report, published in late September 1945, painted a depressing picture of the distress of the D.P.s and recommended that 100,000 of them be given immigrant permits to Palestine.

238. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 July 1959

Coded Tel. WNT822; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

The Embassy reports on the meeting J. Herzog had held with Lewis Jones.[1] The meeting began with congratulations to Lewis Jones on his new position and a review of events in the region since 1955. They then moved on to the issue of free passage and Israel's water project. Jones listened attentively to the presentation of the Israeli attitude. Concerning the Suez Canal, he replied that it would be best to leave the matter at present in the hands of the secretary-general. He said that the Israeli memorandum on the water project[5] has been discussed in depth. He asked for an explanation of the riots in Israel[6] and the problem of the military government. He was given the appropriate answers.

Notes

1. G. Lewis Jones became assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs in July 1959.
2. The reference is to the military action on 28 February 1955, in which 38 Egyptian officers and soldiers were killed near Gaza. The I.D.F. raid was in retaliation for the depredations of an Egyptian gang that had infiltrated Israeli territory a few days earlier and carried out acts of murder and sabotage.
3. With regard to the passage of Israeli cargoes through the Suez Canal; see No. 96.
4. See No. 239.
5. See No. 73.
6. The reference is to the Wadi Salib riots in Haifa.

239. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 July 1959

Coded Tel. WNT824; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

The embassy reports on a meeting between Herzog and Dillon concerning economic matters pending between Israel and the United States. Herzog began with a review of the economic situation in Israel and the need to prepare for 1964.[2] He spoke of the plans to help Israel to move toward economic independence and stressed the gravity of Israel's water problem, explaining that if a solution were not found both agriculture and industry

would be adversely effected. Herzog pointed out the difficulties in utilizing the loan granted by the Export-Import Bank, because of the need to transfer monies designated for industrial development to the advancement of the water projects.[4] This has left a gap in the budget for industrial development. Israel is thus requesting a further loan; when the loan was granted it was described as a first instalment and Israel now requires a second installment. He also mentioned the Israeli requests to the Development Loan Fund.

In his reply, Dillon reminded him of the apprehension in the State Department that Israel would draw all the water it had been allotted from the Jordan River, while Jordan would take only a certain amount from its allotment. Thus there would be no incentive for Israel to undertake the joint water project along the lines of the Johnston Plan. Concerning the loan from the Export-Import Bank, he confirmed that a further instalment has been proposed and suggested that Israel apply to the bank. He promised to take up the matter with the bank after the request has been submitted. As for the Development Loan Fund, he said that funds are not unlimited and as a number of Israeli projects are under review, he suggested that Israel decide on its priorities.

Notes

1. Herzog said that Israel could not agree to Nasser's setting conditions for it: not only did he wish to expand the illegal blockade, he was stipulating impossible conditions, such as f.o.b. cargoes and no publicity. Dillon responded that he hoped Israel would investigate the matter thoroughly with the United Nations secretariat. (See Israel embassy in Washington to Eytan and Tekoah, WNT823, 23 July 1959, 130.09/2314/9.)
2. The reference is evidently to fears that the Israeli economy would be ravaged by the end of the reparations from Germany; see No. 235 and n. 2 there.
3. No. 73.
4. In March 1958 the Export-Import Bank approved a $24.2 million loan for the development of water resources in Israel; see No. 196.

240. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 September 1959

Coded Tel. WNT858; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Harman reports on a 10-minute meeting he had had with President Eisenhower when he presented his credentials.[1] The president asked about

the number of residents in Israel, and about immigration and its directions. Harman replied that there were about another half million Jews who would immigrate to Israel if they were permitted to do so. Eisenhower spoke of the world population explosion and the problems arising out of this. Harman gained the impression that this issue was of concern to him. He did not mention his meeting with Khrushchev.[4]

Notes

1. To mark the presentation of Harman's credentials as ambassador to the United States.
2. Harman had served as consul-general in New York from 1953 to 1955.
3. Guinea was the only former French colony in Africa that broke off relations with France and did not join the French Community. See No. 280.
4. Who visited United States in September 1959 and met with Eisenhower. The latter brought up the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev replied that the Jews enjoyed absolute equality. For more on the meeting with Khrushchev, see No. 241.

241. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 September 1959

Coded Tel. WNT870; Inc.: 130.09/2314/9

Th embassy reports on the meeting of the minister of foreign affairs with Secretary of State Herter, which was devoted almost entirely to Israel's request for arms. The minister began by stating that the balance of arms in the Middle East has been upset over the past three years. Israel's attempts to restore the balance have not succeeded. She reminded him of the Centurion tank affair[2] and stated that due to financial difficulties Israel is unable to purchase even the small amount of equipment the United States had released.[3] She stated that the embassy would soon send a detailed Note on this matter[4] and asked for a positive response to these requests.

Herter replied that "we will link [*sic*] into the matter. When the Note arrives it will be studied." He stated that in the past the State Department has distinguished between offensive and defensive weapons and recalled what had been approved for Israel in the previous year. He added that the State Department regards favourably the purchase by Israel of heavy military equipment from France and Britain and asked if Israel is requesting

equipment that cannot be purchased in these countries. The minister explained the position.

At the end of the meeting, the Minister inquired about the meetings with Khrushchev.[6] Herter replied that the Middle East was on their agenda, as requested by Israel, but they have not reached this item and that it has been left on the agenda for later discussion.

Notes

1. See No. 37.
2. See No. 217.
3. See No. 210, n. 7.
4. See Nos. 243 and 244.
5. One hundred recoilless guns; see No. 213.
6. See No. 240, n. 4.

242. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 November 1959

Coded Tel. TNW660; Outg.: 130.09/2313/1

Reid requested an urgent meeting with the minister of foreign affairs and informed her that the United States embassy in Cairo has received an indirect message from Nasser, according to which he was told by the Soviet Union that Israel is planning aggressive military action. The State Department has instructed its embassy in Cairo to state that the United States government cannot confirm this report, and that this message to the Egyptians from the Soviet Union was "mischievous and irresponsible." Reid has been instructed to state to the Government of Israel that the United States government presumes that, in light of the tenuous situation in Iraq, Israel will not take any step that could increase tension in the area, and that it has no indication that Egypt is planning any aggressive action whatsoever.

The minister of foreign affairs replied that she is concerned at the fact that the source of the information is the Soviet Union. During the past few weeks Israel has received information about the troop concentration in Syria and Sinai. So far, Israel has not treated this as a matter of importance, but in the light of the ambassador's message, the question arises as to the reason for these concentrations. She requested the ambassador to inform Egypt that Israel is not planning any move and that they should clarify the meaning of the massing of their forces.

Reid, who is about to leave for the United States for a private visit, then asked the minister if there are any matters that she wishes him to raise there. The minister replied that first of all she wished to express her thanks and appreciation for the United States actions concerning the prisoners in Damascus.[1] Secondly, she raised the question of arms, in the light of the increasing gap between the Arab and Israeli armaments. She stressed especially the financial burden of arms acquisition placed upon Israel. Despite the fact that Israel could purchase Centurion tanks from Britain and South Africa, it is forced to restrict the numbers because of the lack of funds.[3]

Notes

1. In October 1959, the United States intervened at Israel's request on behalf of eight Syrian Jews who had been accused of espionage and attempting to cross the border to Israel to enlist in the I.D.F. As a result of this intervention, no death sentences were handed down. Instead, five of the defendants were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and the other three were acquitted.
2. In their meeting on 30 October 1959; see Herzog to the M.F.A., W336, 30 November 1959, 130.09/2313/9.
3. Ultimately Israel did not purchase the tanks from South Africa.

243. A. Harman (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 November 1959

Coded Tel. RI383; Inc.: 130.09/2313/10

Harman reports on his meeting with Herter. Meyer, Wahl and Erell were present.

He began with the issue of Arab arms purchases. Israel is concerned at the large amounts and new types of equipment that are upsetting the arms balance in the Middle East. The new situation requires a more lenient approach regarding sources of arms purchase by Israel. There is also the problem of finance, and there is a fear that the security burden will limit the development of the Israeli economy which has progressed during the past year. Israel is in the process of preparing its detailed request and will submit it in the near future. The secretary replied that they would study Israel's request, but reasserted that although the United States might agree to the supply of light arms, it would be preferable for the purchase of heavy equipment to continue from Israel's traditional suppliers. Concerning

finance, he stressed the difficulties the Administration is facing, especially as Congress is demanding restraint. At any event, they will study the Israeli request.

They then moved on to the matter of shipping in the Suez Canal. This section of the conversation appears in No. 106.

Then they moved on to the issue of the water project. Harman referred to the deliberations of the experts[5] and commented that he was certain that these talks will confirm that the Israeli project is in keeping with the Johnston Plan. Thus, Israel was disappointed that the secretary's reply on the previous day[7] contained a positive reference to the Jordan project and promise of aid, while no aid is provided for Israel and they had to be satisfied with the exchange of Notes. Meyer interrupted by saying that they are not ignoring Israel and are doing their utmost to provide assistance for the Israel project. He praised Israel for the plan for the Central Conduit,[8] which would solve the political problems.

Harman concludes by saying that in the next mail he will send a draft of the Note regarding military aid that they are intending to submit to the Americans.[9] Concerning the issue of shipping, there is no doubt that the State Department will continue to maintain contact with the United Nations secretary-general and he will ask them to keep him in the picture concerning the passage of the ship[10] through the Canal. He will cable as soon as the experts have completed their work on the water project.

Notes

1. See No. 242 and n. 1 there.
2. In the elections held on 3 November 1959, the ruling Mapai party won 38.2% of the vote. Abba Eban, formerly ambassador in Washington, was elected to the Knesset on the Mapai list.
3. See No. 241.
4. One paragraph, dealing with the problem of passage through the Suez Canal, is printed in chapter 3, No. 106.
5. The meeting of water experts from United States and Israel, scheduled for 22 November; see No. 79.
6. On 17 July 1959; see No. 73.
7. See Nos. 77 and 78.
8. Intended to carry water whose source was in Israel and not a matter of dispute, and only later to become part of the National Water Carrier; see No. 75.
9. See No. 244.
10. The reference is to the SS *Astypalea*; see No. 108.
11. See No. 79.

244. M. Erell (Washington) to the United States Division. 4 December 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3089/12

Erell forwards a draft of the Note concerning Israel's arms request.[1] The draft is being sent to the minister of foreign affairs and the army and he requests comments and amendments to enable him to submit the Note as soon as possible. The full text will be found in the Main Volume, pp. 435-436.

Note

1. The only version found in M.F.A. files is the one attached here, bearing the date 27 November 1959. The final version, agreed to by all relevant parties, was submitted to the State Department on 9 February 1960. That version has not been found. For details on its submission, the talks held in the State Department, and a list of the weapons requested, see Vol. 14, Nos. 128 and 129.

245. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 14 May 1958

Copy: 130.02/2457/10

Shinnar reports on the political problems on the agenda between Israel and Germany following his meeting with Shiloah, who briefed him on Israel's plans and positions.[1] This briefing will be of use to him in his meetings and propaganda in Germany. Unfortunately, owing to lack of time and the absence of von Brentano and Scherpenberg, he was not able to set up meetings for Shiloah with German officials.

Shinnar is planning to meet in June with senior officials of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and members of the Bundestag. He will ask for more information about the commercial agreement between Germany and the U.A.R. about which he has cabled from Israel.[2] He tends to agree with the view that this agreement has a positive side in that it will enable the Germans to react to Arab incitement against Israel. He will also discuss the results of Nasser's visit to Moscow,[3] and will stress that an understanding between Nasser and the Soviet Union will threaten mainly the Bonn government.

Notes

1. Shiloah's telegram has not been found. Shiloah visited a number of countries in Western Europe on the occasion of the conference of NATO foreign ministers, which was then taking place in Copenhagen.
2. The reference is to a report on Meroz's meeting in Washington about the agreement between Germany and the U.A.R. Under its terms West Germany extended to the U.A.R. credit in the amount of 350 million Deutsche marks, in return for a promise by the U.A.R. to return German assets frozen during World War II. Meroz reported that he heard from a reliable source at the State Department that the Americans were furious about the agreement and said that it would have been preferable to reach an agreement with countries like Jordan or Lebanon. The Germans replied that they had a special account with Egypt, because of their fears about East Germany, and added that the agreement would make it easier for them to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. (See West European Division to Shinnar, telegram 38, 12 May 1958, 130.09/2354/5.)
3. The visit took place in April-May 1958. In a joint communiqué published at the end of the visit, the two countries expressed their support for the principle of coexistence between states, condemned all forms of colonialism and the presence of the military bases of various countries on foreign territory, and expressed their distress at the war in Algeria and their support for the Algerian people's right to independence. The matter of Germany was not mentioned in joint communiqué. For the reference to the Palestinian issue, see chapter 12.
4. Not found.

246. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 21 May 1958

Copy: 130.02/2457/10

Shiloah refers to his last conversation with the minister on Saturday, at which Israel's political activity in Bonn was discussed. He encloses a letter sent by Shinnar to Fischer dealing with the former's talk with Shiloah in Bonn,[1] indicating that Shinnar still holds to the opinion that the last agreement between Bonn and Nasser has some positive aspects,[2] and that he is not intending during the coming months to persevere in any intensive political efforts. Shiloah thinks this is a risky attitude, because he learned on his last visit to Germany that Germany's influence on international affairs and on the Arab world is steadily growing. He thinks that as soon as Germany finds it useful to consolidate its relations with the Arabs, it will do so at Israel's expense. A bad omen in this connection is the appointment of Farid Zayn ul-Din—who was notorious for his relations with the Nazis during the war and later with the Communists—as the U.A.R.'s

Ambassador to Bonn. Shiloah therefore proposes to reinforce Israel's political mission in Bonn by sending M. Fischer there as a special political representative.[4]

Notes

1. No. 245.
2. See ibid., n. 2.
3. See No. 247.
4. Shiloah's suggestion was not accepted, but it was decided to dispatch Fischer for a short visit to Germany; see No. 248.

247. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 9 June 1958

Coded Tel. NWT851; Inc.: 130.09/2339/8

Eban reports on a meeting with von Brentano at the German ambassador's residence, where they discussed the closer relations between Germany and the Arabs. Von Brentano said that it would be desirable for Germany to have influence in Cairo to counter the Soviet influence there. Egypt will only be driven into the arms of the Soviets if it feels it is being isolated. This would have serious results not only for the Middle East but also for Europe. The proof is that, during his visit to Moscow, Nasser rejected some of Khrushchev's extremist proposals, fearing that he would thereby lose German support. Von Brentano agrees with Eban that any unnecessary gesture by the West in Nasser's favour will only enhance his standing; but the lack of such gestures will strengthen the Soviet position in Egypt. There is a genuine dilemma here, and he conceded that there is an element of risk in Germany's policy in the Middle East. But then, there is no such thing as a policy devoid of a certain element of risk.

As regards Israel, von Brentano said that Germany will never do anything that could harm Israel. This is an imperative principle in the new German policy. He urged Israel for its own sake not to belittle the importance of German influence in Cairo. Germany has stated unequivocally in Cairo that it will not, under any circumstances, support any anti-Israeli step.

During the conversation von Brentano raised the issue of establishing German diplomatic representation in Israel. He said that if he thought this

act would be of any political benefit, then he would carry it out immediately. Eban replied that the influence of such a step on the Arabs has been unjustifiably exaggerated, and the proof lies in the fact that some fifty states have diplomatic relations with Israel and none of them has suffered any harm as a result. Von Brentano replied that it is a question of timing, and asked what in Eban's opinion would be the consequences of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. Eban replied that the Arabs would at first protest, but would come to terms with the situation a very short time later.

Eban's impression is that the German government's decision regarding its relations with Egypt is irrevocable and that it will not be significantly influenced by relations between the United States and Egypt. On the contrary, the more the tension between these two countries increases, the more Germany will become convinced that it is the spearhead of the West's mission in the Middle East.[4]

Notes

1. In late April 1958, the United States unfroze blocked accounts of Egypt, after the signing of an agreement between Egyptian representatives and representatives of the shareholders of the Suez Canal company for the payment of compensation to the latter. On 8 May, Assistant Secretary of State William Rountree told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States had cancelled some of the restrictions on the shipment of semi-military materials to the U.A.R. He noted that this step reflected an improvement in the relations between the two countries and that the Administration hoped the process would continue.
2. See No. 245 and n. 2 there.
3. See ibid., n. 3.
4. This telegram was also sent to Shinnar in Cologne. In addition, Fischer cabled instructions regarding a possible meeting between Shinnar and von Brentano on the same subject. Shinnar was to emphasize that nothing would more encourage Nasser to despise the West and strengthen his ties with the Soviets than the assistance that the West was giving him despite those ties. This assistance would help him overcome his economic difficulties and deprived the West of a means to prevent Soviet penetration. (See telegram 98, 15 June 1958, 130.09/2354/5.)

248. M. Fischer to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 18 July 1958

Copy: 130.02/2457/10

Fischer, accompanied by Shinnar, was received by Adenauer for a lengthy talk. Globke was also present on the German side. After the usual

courtesies, Fischer reviewed developments and the situation in the Middle East. He pointed to a series of mistakes made by the Western powers in the past. They have neglected the Christian minority in Lebanon and ignored the fact that the Middle East is in effect a patchwork of minorities, and have created the fiction of a homogeneous Sunni Arab world. They yielded the Suez Canal to Egypt without obtaining any guarantees for free passage through it, and do not support a constructive solution of the Arab refugee problem. They have not succeeded in stopping Soviet penetration of the Middle East, cooperated with the Soviets in saving Nasser's skin, and, finally, have failed to come to an agreement on a Western declaration on the preservation of the territorial integrity of all the Middle Eastern countries.

Fischer then dwelt on the nature of Nasserism. Nasser is not a Soviet satellite nor is he a Communist. He is useful to the Soviets as a tool for destroying the influence of the West in the region and for paving the road for the Soviets to penetrate Africa and Asia.

Fischer then analyzed the current crisis in Lebanon, caused by the impotence of the United Nations and the West. Now that the Americans, followed by the United Nations, have finally woken up, it may be possible to restore calm to the region and to strengthen the position of the United Nations.

Fischer recommends the following steps: the West must stop competing with the Soviets for the favour of fanatic and nationalist elements. It must not ignore any of the factors and minorities in the Middle East. It must present a united front and guarantee unequivocally the independence of all the states. Finally, the entire free world must draw up and carry out a comprehensive plan for the economic and social development of the nations of the Middle East. Here an important role should be played by the European Economic Community, which must develop close relations with the countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. This association with the European Economic Community will give Middle Eastern countries the feeling that they are part of the family of the European nations.

Adenauer replied that for several years now he has been greatly worried about the mistakes in the American, British, and French policies. He is absolutely certain that the aim of Soviet policy is to dominate first Asia, and then Africa. If they could bring this off, Europe would find itself in a pincer movement—and that would mean the end of Western Europe. As to the current crisis, he hopes a way will be found to settle it through the United Nations. He is in favour of guarantees being given to the countries of the Middle East, and agrees with the proposal for the economic development of the region. He spoke at length about France and its future under de Gaulle, and about the latter's particularistic aims, which oppose the idea of the

European Union and which worry Adenauer very much. He also mentioned the United States, whose policy-orientation has been unclear since the latest elections.

Adenauer posed three questions to Fischer:

(1) What is Israel's attitude towards Egypt, and is there any possibility of Germany mediating between the two countries? Fischer replied that Israel would welcome any effort at mediation, but only on condition that Egypt abandon its expansionist policy and that it is made clear to the Arab world that there is no chance whatsoever of destroying Israel or encroaching on its boundaries.

(2) Is it true that Israel is developing nuclear weapons? Fischer replied that nuclear research is going on in Israel with the aim of developing sources of energy for peaceful purposes, and for the desalination of sea water in particular. Adenauer listened and then commented: "But it would be good for your security if you did have an atomic bomb".

(3) Is there any chance of Israel being involved in the present conflict and is there any possibility of Israeli military action against Egypt? Fischer answered: "Absolutely not".

Adenauer ended the talk by saying he welcomed America's forceful action in Lebanon. It is good for the Soviets to be told "this far, and no further". He also asked Israel not to attribute the reserved tone in the German public announcements to any negative attitude towards Israel, but only to their wish to act as a mediator in view of their good standing with the Arabs.

He bade Fischer adieu in a friendly manner and with good wishes.

Notes

1. In May 1951, Maurice Fischer, then the Israel minister to France, and David Horowitz, then the director-general of the Ministry of Finance, met with Chancellor Adenauer and put the issue of reparations to him for the first time.
2. In early 1945, when he served as foreign secretary, Eden was the main moving force behind the establishment of the Arab League.
3. Golda Meir met with de Gaulle in August 1958; see No. 277.
4. General Hans Speidel, commander of NATO land forces in 1957-1963.
5. When Secretary of State Dulles and Assistant Secretary of State Rountree met with Eban and Shiloah in London on 27 July 1958, Dulles said that he had heard from Adenauer that his impression from his conversation with Fischer was that Nasser would not pose a danger if the Western powers concentrated on the economic development of Egypt. Eban replied that he was convinced that Fischer had not meant to create such an impression and took upon himself to see that Fischer clarified the Israeli position to the Government of Germany. (See *aide-mémoire* of the meeting, 27 July 1958, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. XIII, No. 31, pp. 74-77.)

It was evidently in the wake of this conversation that Fischer sent the following telegram to Shinnar on 1 August 1958: "... pursuant to instructions from the foreign minister and to prevent any misunderstandings in the interpretation of our views as presented in our meeting with Adenauer I have drafted a letter to Adenauer. ... The letter is meant to be delivered immediately." (telegram 176, 130.09/2354/5.) The letter has not been found.

249. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the West European Division and M. Fischer. 24 July 1958

Coded Tel. 113; Inc.: 130.09/2354/6

Shinnar reports a talk with Globke, who met him on Adenauer's instructions. The crisis in the Middle East was discussed in the light of a possible summit meeting on that issue[1] and the forthcoming meeting with Dulles on the same subject.[2] Globke wishes to learn Israel's position on the following four points:

1) If Nasser succeeds in bringing Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon under his influence, is it possible that he will then attack Israel? Shinnar replied with a forceful "Yes", saying that Israel would then pull no punches.

2) If the Lebanese crisis is settled by the lawful election of a new president, should the United Nations force then remain stationed in Lebanon? Shinnar replied in the affirmative, conditional however on guarantees being given by the West for the territorial integrity of all the countries in the Middle East and on steps being taken for the development of the region, in the spirit of his talk with Adenauer.[3] Globke said he feared that widening the scope of the negotiations in this way would also open the door for the Soviets to raise issues of interest to them and to the Arab world.

3) Does Israel have any ideas how to solve the problem of Jordan, where the situation is still unstable? Shinnar replied that Israel is always doing its utmost not to aggravate the situation there.

4) Does the American proposal to intervene if Israel is attacked refer to the partition lines of 1947, seeing that these no longer exist? Shinnar replied that the conditions underlining the partition resolution had changed, making the resolution meaningless.

Thus far the questions. Shinnar requests that his answers be enlarged on where necessary.

Notes

1. In response to Khrushchev's proposal to convene summit conference in Geneva to discuss the crisis in the Middle East, Great Britain proposed that the conference take place as part of a special session of the Security Council. In the end the summit conference was not held.
2. At the end of July Dulles came to Bonn to meet with Adenauer about the crisis in the Middle East. See No. 251.
3. See No. 248.
4. See No. 250.

250. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to W. Eytan and M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 27 July 1958

Coded Tel. 116; Inc.: 130.09/2354/8

At a further meeting with Globke, Shinnar transmitted to him additional elucidations received from Israel regarding his questions.[1] Globke mentioned with some concern that Eisenhower's letter[2] opens the way for additional issues to be put on the agenda. He dwelt on his worry about Jordan, whose future is uncertain. As to Iraq, he said Germany will recognize the new regime just as other European countries have done.

Shinnar concludes from what Globke said that Germany will be among the first countries to recognize Iraq. He wonders whether this might not be a good opportunity to renew the demand for the establishment of diplomatic relations. He spoke about this with Boehm, who is prepared to act in this matter. He requests approval of this initiative.[5]

Notes

1. Telegram 63 has not been found. The other two telegrams confirmed Shinnar's positions in his conversation with Globke but asked him to emphasize that any attempt to truncate Israel's borders would be met with a military response by Israel. (The telegrams, dated 25 July, are in File 130.09/2354/8.)
2. In response to the Note from Khrushchev (dated 14 July), in which he proposed a summit conference in Geneva to discuss Middle Eastern affairs, Eisenhower replied that if the Soviet Union believed there was a threat to world peace it should turn to the Security Council. Nevertheless he did not rule out discussions outside the United Nations about regional problems that were not an immediate threat to peace.
3. The Note (in German), dated 12 December 1957, is in File 130.23/3087/12. It was delivered to Adenauer on 18 December 1957 by Giora Josephthal, who was sent to him by Ben-Gurion as part of Israel's efforts to reach an agreement with NATO.

4. West Germany recognized the new regime in Iraq on 31 July 1958. It was the second Western state to do so, after Greece.
5. Shinnar received confirmation of this approach, but Boehm's request was not answered. (See Eytan to Israel Missions Abroad, 28 July 1958, 130.09/2378/8; Shinnar to the M.F.A., telegram 516, 1 August 1958, 130.09/2354/6.)

251. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the West European Division. 30 July 1958

Copy: 130.23/3100/1

Shinnar reviews Germany's actions in the Middle East crisis. The German press has been unanimous in criticizing the American and British intervention, arguing that there is no stopping the Arab nationalist movements, which aim at liberating the people from the rule of those who do not represent them. The German government, on the other hand, though angry at not having been consulted, is in favour of the intervention, stressing that it is not aimed against anybody but is intended to aid those who have appealed for help in view of the threat to their independence. The Western states have been contacted, and talks have been held with them as well as with the U.A.R. and Israel. Shinnar has already reported on the consultations with Israel.[2]

Shinnar thinks the following points in the Bonn government's attitude towards Israel are important. From the start of the argument about calling a summit meeting, the German government has insisted on a solution being found within the framework of the United Nations, on the one hand, and on agreeing on a constructive policy of the West towards the Middle Eastern countries, on the other hand, "while taking fully into account the interests of Turkey, Israel and Iran". As to Israel's participation in the summit talks, Germany has said that it must be invited if the Arabs are. The Germans have stressed their support of a special declaration by the West guaranteeing the territorial integrity and independence of all the countries of the Middle East, including Israel within its present borders.

Notes

1. See chapter 1.
2. See No. 248.
3. See Nos. 249 and 250. No details of the meeting on 26 July have been found.
4. Shinnar's report has not been found, but according to a telegram sent to several

missions on the basis of his report, Globke told him that the meeting with Dulles had been devoted to clarification only and no decisions had been taken. (See M.F.A. to Israel Missions Abroad, Ministry Bulletin 135, 29 July 1958, 130.09/2312/11.)

5. The telegram has not been found.
6. The proposed summit conference in Geneva; see No. 249, n. 1.
7. See No. 248.
8. In this conversation, Scherpenberg expressed optimism about the prospects that the West would present a united front in its demands for a regional settlement by means of guarantees of the territorial integrity and independence of all countries, including Israel. (See Shinnar to Eytan and Fischer, 4 August 1958, 130.23/3100/1.)
9. Dittmann told Shinnar that the German ambassador had met with Nasser on 30 July and had been impressed by his moderation. He did not even mention Israel (see ibid.).

252. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 31 July 1958

Copy: 130.02/2457/10

Fischer sums up his visit to Germany and puts forward several recommendations to further the relations between the two countries.

1) What Germany is like today:

The first thing that strikes one is the flourishing economy, which can explain two phenomena: the determination to preserve what has been achieved and improve it still further through European cooperation and the conquest of new markets; and the relative willingness to help other countries and to pay compensation and reparations. As to international policy, there is the aspiration to unite the two Germanies, which manifests itself not so much by territorial irredentism but by the wish to unite the Fatherland and to take in the refugees from East Germany. These attitudes cause a keen interest in international developments and in the inter-bloc conflict, and a strong fear of possible nuclear warfare. All this, together with memories of the past, results in a pronounced unwillingness to intervene in matters touching other countries and in the conviction that conflicts should be settled by peaceful means. The prevailing attitude is that Germany should recuperate from the 1945 devastation in the opposite way to what it did after 1918: that is, it should go along with the current of history and not try to reverse it. A most important role in this prevailing spirit is played by Adenauer's personality and standing. His age, wisdom, political acumen, and tactical genius make him the dominant and unquestioned leader of German life today.

2) Attitude towards Israel and the Middle East:

The prevailing basic opinion in Germany is favourable towards Israel. However, this has hardly any influence on policy in general. The Germans are unanimous in considering the Middle East to be within their traditional sphere of influence. They wish to exploit this influence to assure themselves of markets and prestige. They claim, no doubt in perfect sincerity, that they intend to put their prestige in the region at the service of the West with the aim of mediating between the West and the nations of the Middle East. This does not mean that the Germans do not understand, intellectually, the Nasserist threat and the significance of the Soviet penetration of the region, but they immediately revert to their previous attitude, motivated by the reasons mentioned above. This has become a genuine doctrine in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3) Talks and meetings in Germany

Fischer has held many meetings and talks with politicians and officials, from both the government and the opposition. The most important meeting was of course that with Adenauer, on which he has reported separately.[2] His assessment is that the talk was timely and useful. He thinks that his interlocutors were deeply impressed by his arguments, but the question is: how long will this impression last?

4) Israel's representation:

Israel's mission in Cologne, headed by Shinnar, is mainly a reparations mission with an economic orientation. As such, it functions almost to perfection. Shinnar's personal prestige in all circles is considerable and he has many contacts and can open doors. At the same time, he considers himself first and foremost as head of a reparations mission, and sees the political aspect of secondary importance. Maintaining political contacts demands constant and continuous activity–including among the lower echelons, which Shinnar is incapable of undertaking. The attempt to attach to him a senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not been particularly successful owing to Shinnar's domineering nature. The solution might be in attaching to the mission an official with the rank of First or Second Secretary, who should be intelligent, energetic and unassuming. This official would maintain daily contacts with the middle echelon of German officials, while relations with the higher ranks should be entrusted to a senior diplomat attached to one of the embassies in another capital (Paris or Bern). Shinnar himself, whether he stays in Germany or returns to Israel, will continue to be in touch with the very highest ranks.[10]

It is necessary to intensify information activities in Germany. The present relevant section in the mission suffers from lack of adequate manpower. This section should be reinforced. Also, more Israeli lecturers should be sent to Germany. The small number of Israeli students there as compared to the

numerous Arab students has its disadvantages. It is perhaps risky to send Israeli students to Germany for longer periods of study, but it may be advisable to send delegations or groups of students there to attend courses for limited periods and also be active in lecturing and information. More members of the Bundestag, journalists and students should also be invited to Israel. This is the most certain way to gain sympathy and understanding.

Notes

1. Bartur, accompanied by Shinnar, met with the state secretary in the Ministry of Economics and spoke about the multilateral agreement and other economic matters. See Bartur to Meir, 17 August 1958, 130.19/4488/12.
2. See No. 248.
3. Fischer met twice with Blankenhorn, the German ambassador to NATO, on 16 and 25 July. Reports on the meetings are in File 130.02/2457/10.
4. For a report on one of the meetings see the letter from Fischer to the foreign minister, 16 July 1958, ibid.
5. See No. 248.
6. Leo Savir, deputy director of the West European Division in the M.F.A., accompanied Fischer on his mission to Germany.
7. Several words, of personal character, have been omitted.
8. The reference is evidently to an initiative by Shinnar to obtain a loan of 450 million Deutsche marks, in accordance with Article Four of the reparations agreement. See No. 255; F. E. Shinnar, *In the Bonds of Constraints and Emotions* (Hebrew), pp. 65-69.
9. For an abstract of these meetings, see the telegram from Shinnar to Eshkol and Sapir, 18 July 1958, 130.09/2354/6. Shinnar said tersely that "the matter" (see n. 8 above) had been settled finally.
10. Ultimately Yohanan Meroz was named "political officer" in the Israel mission in Cologne. Meroz took up the post in April 1959, with the title of deputy head of mission.

253. M.G. Hess (Jerusalem) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 28 August 1958

Copy: 130.23/3093/17

Hess writes that he has been appointed to deal with the issue of reparations from Austria and is due to meet the representatives of the Central Committee of Austrian Jewish Immigrants.[1] The present situation is as follows. The Austrian government contends, on principle, that Austria was conquered by the Germans, making it a victim of the Nazis and not an

accessory to their crimes. This is in direct opposition to the attitude of Germany, which claims that Austria was united with Germany of its own free will, and therefore its status is that of a "successor state". These opposing attitudes have resulted in many Austrian Jews losing the right to reparations from either state.

In spite of its declared principle, the Austrian government has been forced to do something for the victims of the Nazis. A reparations law, passed in July 1947, was subsequently amended eleven times. This law is much less satisfactory than the German one. One of its main disadvantages for Israeli residents is the regulation stating that the claimant must be an Austrian citizen—thus disqualifying from the very beginning all those Jews who lived in Austria before the war but were not Austrian citizens, and all those Jews who emigrated from Austria before and during the war and whose citizenship was revoked by the Nazis.

There is a Committee for Jewish Claims from Austria on which are represented 23 Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Jewish community of Vienna, and others. This Committee, with the support of the Government of Israel, conducted negotiations with the Austrian government, resulting in the establishment of a Hilfsfond [Assistance Fund] of some $22 million for aiding Austrian Jews living abroad, irrespective of their nationality. The money is paid out in ten instalments. An elaborate table serves to determine the amount of reparations, which depends in principle on the recipient's material circumstances rather than on the damage suffered. In general, this fund is more of a social welfare instrument rather than one of reparations.

Quite recently, in June 1958, three additional reparations laws were finally passed. Only one of them, dealing with reparations for war damages and persecution, is of relevance to Israeli residents. It provides for compensation for war damage to household furniture and professional equipment. This law is in practice very disappointing, as the maximum amount of compensation is very low (some 10,000 Austrian schillings), with the proviso that any other compensation received would be deducted from that received under this law, including the aid received from the Hilfsfond mentioned above.

An additional problem is the recovery of confiscated property. The Staatsvertrag between Austria and the Allies[2] provides for the restitution of all property seized after 12 March, 1938 from any person because of his religious or racial affiliation. However, a certain article in that treaty accords special privileges in this respect to citizens of members states of the United Nations, while Jews who were persecuted can only submit their claims as Austrian nationals who suffered war damages. The issue here is

whether Israel can demand for its citizens the privileges accorded to those of the members of the United Nations.

The formal position adopted so far by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been that Israel should not appear as a party to the negotiations with Austria, and that these should be left in the hands of the Jewish organizations. The announcement of 12 August stated that Israel would not demand reparations from Austria but would demand the restoration of heirless property and personal compensation. Though this stand allows Israel to act in the defence of the rights of its citizens at least as regards personal compensation, Israel has so far not made any official move in this direction. In Hess's opinion, the time has come to review this position. The State of Israel should appear as an interested party, and should prove that Austria shares the responsibility for the perpetrated crimes. Even if Israel decides not to appear as a party to the negotiations, it should demand that the Powers signatory to the Staatsvertrag apply pressure on Austria.

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 7 August; a report on it is in File 130.23/393/17. It was convened at the request of the Committee of Austrian Jews to call the M.F.A.'s attention to the problem of individual reparations from Austria. It was agreed that "the ministry will help resolve the question to the best of its ability and powers."
2. The treaty was signed on 15 May 1955 by the four occupying powers–United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France–and Austria. The four powers committed themselves to removing their armed forces from Austria and restoring its sovereignty. Austria committed itself to neutrality between the Eastern and Western blocs.

254 F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 23 September 1958

Coded Tel. 544; Inc.: 130.09/2354/6

In a conversation with Scherpenberg and as instructed in telegrams from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[1] Shinnar brought up Israel's concern over the policy of Italy and Germany toward Egypt. Scherpenberg replied that the attitude of the Bonn government to Israel is quite clear and that it is also transmitted by Chancellor Adenauer to all his interlocutors, including Fanfani. He said again that any solution in the Middle East should depend on guarantees being given for Israel's territorial integrity and independence, and on this they are of like mind with Italy.

Shinnar alluded to the opinion prevailing in the United States that the Germans do not refrain from voicing to Nasser their criticism of the American attitude towards Arab nationalist movements. Scherpenberg replied that this is sheer nonsense. He complained about the Americans not clarifying to their allies their position on the Middle East which, however, has not deterred Germany from supporting their latest steps in the Middle East. The Germans are concerned at the moment about the developments in Iraq, but they think that if the present comparative calm continues it could contribute to the solution of the Israeli-Arab problem.

Notes

1. These telegrams (telegram 239 has not been found) dealt with Italian policy in the Middle East. In telegram 217 (12 September 1958, 130.09/2354/5) Fischer forwarded to Shinnar the text of the telegram he had sent to Washington concerning the Italian effort, led by Fanfani, to bring Italy, and following it the West, closer to Nasser. Fischer said that there was an urgent need to rouse fierce criticism of the Italian policy in the United States and the entire West. The encouragement that Nasser was receiving from Italy and Germany was weakening the efforts of those who understood that the struggle against Nasser was vital for the preservation of Western interests and for stemming the Soviet penetration. Shinnar was asked to act to make the Germans aware of the dangers of a pro-Nasser policy. Ministry Bulletin 237 (18 September 1958, 130.09/2378/8), from the M.F.A. to the Israel missions in Rome and Cologne, included a telegram from Eban to the effect that the value of Fanfani's visit to Cairo must not be overplayed; it was nevertheless serious that the Germans never stopped telling Nasser about their reservations concerning the American stand on Arab nationalism.
2. Summing up a debate in the Italian Senate, Fanfani devoted a significant portion of his remarks to the Middle East. He emphasized Italy's traditional friendship with Arab countries, North Africa, and Israel, and expressed the hope and desire for improving this friendship. (See Israel embassy in Rome to the M.F.A., telegram 965, 19 September 1958, 130.09/2358/4.)
3. See No. 325.
4. The reference is to Abd-ul-Salam Aref, who was named deputy chief of staff, deputy prime minister, and minister of the interior after the coup on 14 July 1958. He was dismissed by Qassim in September, chiefly because of his support for union with the U.A.R.
5. Rashid Ali Kilani, prime minister of Iraq in 1941, who collaborated with the Nazis. He fled to Germany after British forces occupied the country.

255. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to L. Eshkol, P. Sapir and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 October 1958

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2354/6

In a talk with Adenauer the loan[2] was discussed and finally approved, after the Chancellor's doubts regarding certain points were allayed. He said he would convene the ministers concerned in order to have the final decision formally adopted. The agreement may be signed the following week, and Shinnar will leave for Israel. Political matters were also discussed at the meeting and Adenauer reiterated his unequivocal position that any settlement in the Middle East should be conditional on the preservation of Israel's territorial integrity and independence. Shinnar will telegraph further details to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[4]

Notes

1. No report on this meeting has been found.
2. The reference is evidently to the loan of 450 million Deutsche marks mentioned in No. 252, n. 8. In his book, Shinnar recounts that the loan agreement was signed on 28 October 1958; see F. E. Shinnar, *In the Bonds of Constraints and Emotions* (Hebrew), p. 68.
3. The reference is to Hermann Abs, one of the directors of the Deutsche Bank.
4. Shinnar cabled that he told Adenauer about the prevailing view in the United States, namely, that Germany was emphasizing to Nasser its reservations about the American interpretation of Arab nationalism in its Nasserite version. Adenauer denied this vigorously and asked him to tell the prime minister that absolutely nothing had changed in his favourable and unwavering position as to the need for guarantees for the territorial integrity and independence of Israel as a precondition for any settlement in the Middle East. (See telegram 42, 15 October 1958, 130.09/2354/6.)

256. Y. Sahar (Vienna) to the West European Division. 9 January 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3093/11

Sahar reports on his meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Kreisky. It was set up to discuss the tension aroused between the two countries following the demonstrations against the screening of German-speaking films in Israel.[1] But, as this issue had been resolved in an exchange of letters between the two

countries, the meeting was devoted instead to discussing general matters in Israel–Austria relations as well as political matters concerning the Middle East. Kreisky complained about the criticism levelled against the Austrians because of their past, and said the majority of the present members of the Austrian government had suffered under the Nazi regime. He also referred to the serious discussions now under way on raising the level of diplomatic representation of the two countries.[3]

Touching on political matters, Kreisky said that Nasser is showing signs of a change of heart and that he should be helped in that. When Sahar refuted this view, Kreisky partly retracted his statement but argued that the West must not give up trying. He said an original way should be found to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and asked whether Israel could issue a statement to the effect that it was prepared to admit all the refugees, with the assumption that only a third of them would wish to be repatriated and that their absorption would take a number of years. He referred to Austria's positive experience with the refugees from South Tyrol. Though they had been battling for many years for their right to return to Italy, only a few of them decided to be repatriated when Italy's consent was finally obtained. The talk concluded with a discussion of the Cold War and the international situation.

Notes

1. In late 1958 there were demonstrations in Israel against the screening of German-language films, including Austrian films. The Austrian minister in Israel complained about this to Fischer and the minister of foreign affairs, who replied that it was necessary to take account of public feeling in Israel on this matter.
2. Martin Fuchs, secretary-general (director-general) of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. On 7 March 1959, the secretary-general of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the Israel minister in Vienna that he intended to propose raising the level of the legations of the two countries to embassy level. The minister reported this to Israel (7 March 1959, 130.23/3091/11). The minister of foreign affairs reacted that Israel should wait for the Austrians to act and do nothing to promote the matter until then (Gazit to Eytan, 15 April 1959, ibid.). The Austrian proposal was made on 17 June, and explained by the general Austrian policy of maintaining only embassies with friendly countries (see Sahar to the M.F.A., 7 June 1959, 130.09/2305/7). The change in status was implemented in September 1959.

257. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the West European Division. 16 January 1959

Copy: 130.23/3100/1

Shinnar had a number of meetings and conversations[1] following the reports on Grotewohl's visits to Cairo and Baghdad and the announcements on the establishment of consular relations between East Germany and Egypt. At a meeting with Scherpenberg he was told that their ambassador in Cairo had been urgently recalled to report on what he knew about the situation, and there had been a number of other developments of concern to the Germans. However, a few days later and following the ambassador's report that Nasser was not planning to recognize East Germany and that the consular relations would be unilateral in practice (Egypt would not open a consulate in Berlin), it became evident that Germany considered the crisis over.

Shinnar thinks that these events demonstrate a full retreat on the part of the Germans, in line with their policy of doing as much as possible not to aggravate their relations with the Arabs. Owing to the defusing of the crisis, the option of Israel exploiting it in order to establish diplomatic relations with Germany no longer exists, also seeing that the reactions to his proposals on that subject were very noncommittal.

Shinnar estimates that what is now of special interest and concern to Germany is the Berlin crisis and the latest Note from the Soviets on the subject of a peace treaty.[7] That is why they wish to avoid being involved in other crises. On the other hand, it cannot be ruled out, that in the course of possible developments during the next few months, the Bonn government will itself propose appointing a permanent representative in Israel. They will find out that present and future developments definitely require that they be in possession of continuous reports from Israel, which is not necessarily the case for the neighbouring countries.

Notes

1. These telegrams (604, 606, 607, in File 130.09/2254/8) deal with Grotewohl's visit to Cairo and Baghdad and the conclusions to be drawn from it. Shinnar reported on the meeting he had on this subject with Scherpenberg; inter alia he suggested that he take advantage of the displeasure with the Arabs prevailing in Bonn to establish the diplomatic representation between Israel and West Germany.
2. See No. 258.
3. The confirmation given by the host country to consular representatives, authorizing them to perform their duties.
4. This telegram has not been found.

5. At the meeting, Shinnar criticized the West Germany's conciliatory line toward Nasser (see Shinnar to the M.F.A., telegram 606, 12 January 1959, 130.09/2354/8).
6. No report has been found and it is not clear whether the meeting in fact took place.
7. On 10 January, the Soviet Union sent notes to the three Western powers, the two Germanies, and the countries that had fought against Germany in World War II and proposed convening within two months a conference in Warsaw or Prague to draft a peace treaty with Germany.

258. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 22 January 1959

Coded Tel. 614; Inc.: 130.09/2354/8

Germany's relations with the Arab countries have been discussed in depth with Scherpenberg, as has the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel. Scherpenberg said that Nasser had been alarmed by West Germany's reaction to Grotewohl's visit.[4] He stated that he would not open a consulate in Berlin nor would he accord an *exequatur* to an East German consulate. Scherpenberg also told Shinnar in the strictest confidence that Nasser had told their ambassador that he had no intention of fulfilling all of his promises to Grotewohl.[5]

Shinnar asked whether Nasser's conduct would affect Bonn's position on the issue of relations with Israel. Scherpenberg intimated that such a change in policy is not imminent but it may certainly become possible when justified by developments, especially if Nasser continues with his provocative ways and strengthens his ties with East Germany. He also admitted to the serious disadvantage in the lack of a German representative in Israel, especially in view of Israel's unique situation in the region.

Notes

1. Fanfani, prime minister and foreign minister of Italy (from June 1958 until February 1959) talked with Sasson when he returned from his visit to Cairo. On this meeting, see No. 326.
2. Wilhelm Grewe, the West German ambassador in Washington. In his conversation with Eban he said that relations between Cairo and Bonn were tense. Germany had withdrawn from the plan to provide assistance for the Aswan dam not necessarily because of the Grotewohl incident (see No. 257), but because of the agreement between Cairo and Moscow that permitted only the Soviets to oversee the first stage of the project. (See the M.F.A. to the mission in Cologne, telegram 387, 16 January 1959, 130.09/2354/7.)

3. The plan to lay an oil pipeline from Eilat to Ashdod; see No. 21.
4. See No. 257 and n. 5 there.
5. In a telegram to the M.F.A., (15 January 1959, 130.23/3100/1), Shinnar wrote: "After hearing the report from Becker [the German ambassador in Cairo], the Bonn government retreated and its spokesman announced that the crisis in relations with the U.A.R. was over."
6. Spanish Foreign Minister Fernando Maria Castiella visited Cairo in January 1959.

259. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to W. Eytan and M. Fischer. 4 March 1959

Copy: 130.23/3099/23

Shinnar reports a meeting with Eckhardt, at which the international situation and the Berlin crisis were discussed. Also discussed was the establishment of relations between West Germany and Israel. The tentative conclusions reached were as follows:

1) If the Berlin crisis escalates and reaches a flashpoint, no solution to the issue of the relations will become possible.

2) If the Powers enter into negotiations, then the problem of recognition of East Germany will disappear and will no longer be an obstacle to the establishment of relations with Israel. Eckhardt estimated that, in such an eventuality, and not later than this summer, Germany would approach Israel on this subject. He emphasized his conviction that the "unfortunate episode", as he called it, will find its positive solution not later than the time stated.

Note

1. See No. 258.

260. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 April 1959

Copy: 130.23/3093/11

The Austrian minister read out to Fischer a letter he had received from the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he was instructed to act to

strengthen the relations between the two countries on the basis of the following two facts:

1) The establishment of a fund of $6m in aid of Jewish victims of the Nazi regime.[2]

2) The aid extended by Austria in the matter of the Jewish immigration from Romania.[1]

The Austrian government expressed its hope that these facts would be given due prominence in the Israeli press.

Fischer replied that, as to the first point, the Jewish immigrants from Austria feel deeply disappointed with this fund as it falls very short of the amount necessary. He suggested that the minister meet with these former Austrian Jews and hear about their demands at first hand.

As to the second point, he stressed that the public is well aware of Austria's help in the matter, but no publicity has been given to this immigration for obvious reasons.

Notes

1. See chapter 18.
2. See No. 253. On the fund, in the amount of $6 million, see a letter from Nehemia Robinson of the World Jewish Congress to the Foreign Ministry. In his opinion, the fund would suffice to pay only negligible compensation, about 20,000 Austrian schillings per person. (The letter is in File 130.23/3093/17.)

261. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 21 May 1959

Copy: 130.23/3099/25

Shinnar has had a 45-minute meeting with Adenauer. After the usual courtesies, Adenauer spoke of his plans for the future. He has not yet finally decided whether to step down. If the present political situation does not improve, he will then be obliged to remain at his post. The talk then turned to a discussion of the international situation. Adenauer is mostly concerned about the differences of opinion among the Western Powers, in particular about the necessity of holding a summit conference. He regrets Dulles's retirement, because he used to stand up to the Soviets, and is doubtful whether Herter, his successor, has the same experience and authority as Dulles.

Relations between Israel and Germany were then discussed. Shinnar

briefed Adenauer about the developments in Israel, the progress made in industry, and the aid being extended by Israel to African countries. The political situation is at present relatively quiet, yet there are causes for worry, such as the arming of Iraq, the new government in Jordan, and Nasser's latest craziness in confiscating cargoes in the Suez Canal. In answer to Adenauer's question, Shinnar said that Israel remains convinced that Nasser should not be bribed by offering him aid in competition with the Soviets. He feels that the West should make any help given to Egypt conditional on their undertaking to concentrate their efforts on developing their country and to honour the independence of the other countries in the Middle East. Adenauer replied that this was exactly the position Israel had taken at his meeting with Fischer a year ago. He approved of it then and he approves of it now.

Shinnar raised the question of diplomatic relations. Adenauer said he had understood Israel's reluctance during the first stages of their contacts and had respected it. He now wishes to conclude the process as soon as possible and is certain this will take place "when we are able to see the impending developments more clearly". Shinnar replied that this issue should preferably be dealt with after the elections in Israel scheduled for November,[2] and better still—after the new government has been sworn in at the beginning of 1960. Adenauer replied that it is out of the question for relations to be established any later than that. He added that this matter is very close to his heart and that he would be happy to close the circle by giving formal expression to his feeling for Israel. Shinnar decided not to dwell on this point further because it was the clearest statement of intent given by the Chancellor so far.

Notes

1. No report on this conversation has been found.
2. The elections to the Fourth Knesset were scheduled for 3 November 1959.
3. Adenauer decided, in April 1959, to run for president of Germany, but changed his mind two months later.
4. This was held in May 1959, with the participation of the foreign ministers of the three Western powers and the Soviet Union. It dealt with the problems of Berlin, German reunification, and European security.
5. Dulles resigned as secretary of state in April 1959.
6. See chapter 3.
7. Hazza al-Majali was appointed prime minister of Jordan in May 1959.
8. See No. 248.
9. See chapter 15.
10. See Introduction, p. xxix.

262. Y. Sahar (Vienna) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 June 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3093/11

Sahar refers to his letter to Fischer dealing with the intention to extend an invitation to the Austrian foreign minister to visit Israel.[1] On the one hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has rejected Austria's offer to improve relations between the two countries, informing the Austrian minister that Israel considers the proposed reparations settlement unsatisfactory, even though it was agreed upon by an official Jewish delegation that also represented Israeli interests.[2] Moreover, Sahar has been instructed to disregard two Austrian proposals to raise the level of the diplomatic representation.[3] And on the other hand, he had now received instructions from Israel to approach the Austrian Foreign Ministry with a request that their representative at the United Nations support Israel's claim for free passage through the Suez Canal. From the day he arrived in Vienna he has encountered a warm and heartfelt attitude towards Israel, starting with the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs. Sahar thinks it a mistake to give the Austrians the cold shoulder when they offer their good will and take the initiative in improving relations–especially in light of another school of opinion here which calls for closer relations with the Arabs. He therefore proposes that the problem be studied again and that he be given appropriate instructions.[4]

Notes

1. Sahar responded to Fischer's letter of reprimand for having taken the initiative to invite the Austrian foreign minister, L. Figl, to visit Israel. (The letter is in File 130.23/3093/11; Fischer's letter has not been found.)
2. See No. 260.
3. See Fischer to Sahar, 17 April 1959, ibid.
4. Eytan replied that he had asked Ben-Gurion whether he saw reason to oppose raising the level of diplomatic relations with Austria, and the prime minister had replied: "If we have a minister, why not an ambassador?" Eytan added that "certain circles in Israel have claims to present to the Austrian government, but this should not influence normal relations between the two countries. If the public in Israel does not manifest a deep friendship for the Austrian people, this does not exempt the Foreign Ministry of its obligation to foster relations with Austria and its government, to the extent possible." (See Eytan to Sahar, 24 June 1959, ibid.)

263. Editorial Note

The Government Crisis in Israel caused by the Arms Deal with West Germany

There was a government crisis in Israel in June–July 1959 because of the arms deal with West Germany. The crisis erupted after the German weekly *Der Spiegel* published a report, in late June, that a Haifa armaments manufacturer was about to provide the West Germany army with rifle-propelled grenades and that a contract had been signed on 28 October 1958 between the Soltam company of Haifa and the Bundeswehr, after a similar deal with Finland had not been implemented.

The report set off a public storm and violent opposition from Ahdut Ha'avoda, Mapam, and the Israel Communist Party (Maki) on the left, and Herut on the right. In an interview with *Davar* (26 June 1959), Ben-Gurion said: "The deal is very important for the Military Industries. . . . Second, these funds, the dollars that will be added to the defence budget, will be used to acquire arms that are vital for the I.D.F. We could not purchase the essential weapons that we need without these dollars." In interview with the *New York Times* on 26 June 1959 he said that in addition to the economic advantages, the deal also had defence implications. He referred to the close ties between West Germany and France and recalled Bonn's status in the NATO Council and the Common Market.

Ben-Gurion noted that he differentiats between the Germany of yesterday and the Germany of today and added that closer relations with Germany would strengthen Israel's economic and diplomatic standing (according to *Davar*, 28 June 1959).

The Knesset began debating a no-confidence motion on the deal, submitted by Maki, on 29 June 1959. The next day Ben-Gurion submitted the following motion: "The government proposes that the Knesset adopt the following statement as its resolution: 'The Knesset expresses its opinion against cancellation of the export of weapons to West Germany and proposes conducting a debate on this matter'." (see *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Fourth Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXVII, p. 2377).

During the course of the debate Ben-Gurion added: "The Germany of Adenauer and the Social Democrats is not the Germany of Hitler. . . . The Germany of today will never return to be what it was before World War II. . . . It matters to Israel whether Germany is our enemy or friend. . . . A Germany that is hostile to Israel . . . also jeopardizes the friendship of the other nations of Western Europe and is liable to exert a negative influence on the United States and other countries of America. It is a rising force—although it will never again be a world power as it was before World War

II—and its attitude towards us will affect to no little extent the attitudes of other countries that have relations with it." (see ibid., p. 2408).

The government motion was approved by a vote of 57 for, 45 against, and six abstentions (see ibid., p. 2416).

Because the ministers belonging to Mapam and Ahdut Ha'avoda, who voted against the government's position, refused to resign, Ben-Gurion submitted his own resignation, which was tantamount to the resignation of the entire government. The efforts to set up a new government proved unsuccessful. The outgoing government continued to serve in a caretaker capacity until the elections for the Fourth Knesset, on 3 November 1959 and the establishment of a new government on 16 December 1959.

264. Y. Meroz (Cologne) to M. Fischer and F.E. Shinnar (Jerusalem). 3 July 1959

Tel. 247; Inc.: 130.09/2354/8

Meroz reports a talk with Dittmann, who raised the issue of the arms deal[1] and the surrounding publicity, which had caused great harm to both Israel and Germany. He said that all of Bonn's representatives in the Arab capitals had been summoned to the foreign ministers or their deputies to hear their protests against Germany's strengthening of Israel—quoting the prime minister as saying that the I.D.F. would come out of the deal strengthened. Meroz replied that the Arabs required no apologies, but should be told that this was a simple business deal. Dittmann said that this would be exactly their reply, and they would add that, if the Arab states produced arms of the same quality, then Bonn would be happy to buy from them too.

Note

1. See preceding Editorial Note.

265. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 8 October 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3099/24

Shinnar reports a talk with Knappstein in which current affairs were discussed, in particular the issue of the diplomatic relations. Shinnar reviewed the promises and the statements on this subject and also referred to Philip Ben's meeting with Adenauer.[1] He stressed that, in spite of what Adenauer had told Ben, Israel assumes that he will keep the promise given to Shinnar.

Knappstein replied that they have been struggling unceasingly with the problem of how long, and to what extent, they should keep to the Hallstein doctrine, according to which the Bonn government must sever its relations with any state recognizing East Germany. There are various schools of thought, including those calling for abandoning this doctrine entirely and others wishing to disregard it if the state that recognizes East Germany holds to an ideology close to that of the Communist world. He explained that if the doctrine continued to be adhered to, they could not, with their own hands, drive the Arabs to recognizing East Germany as a reaction to Bonn's recognition of Israel. On the other hand, if they decided to modify their policy on recognition, it would be easier for them to recognize Israel. This question is now being discussed and Israel is one of the factors influencing the awaited decision. Therefore, what Shinnar told him just now is very important.[8]

Notes

1. In an interview given to Phillip Ben and published in *Maariv* on 5 October, Adenauer lavished praise on Israel but said that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany at the present would only fan Arab hatred of Israel; accordingly, informal relations between the two countries were preferable. In reaction, Shinnar cabled the M.F.A. (telegram 720, 6 October 1959, 130.09/2354/8), that "in my opinion, Adenauer's remarks do not constitute a reason to change our action plan, based on my conversation of 20 May [No. 261], and accordingly we will begin it in the middle of November."
2. See chapter 3.
3. In the interview, Ben-Gurion said that Israel must relate to West Germany as to any other country, because it and its citizens had recognized their moral responsibility for the crimes against the Jewish people and because today it was headed by anti-Nazi statesmen. At the same time, Israel-German relations were affected by irrational factors that could not be ignored. For this reason he was opposed to having Israeli students study in Germany and would not want the German language taught in

schools in Israel. He himself would not visit Germany, unless there were some important diplomatic need to do so (*Ha'aretz*, 2 October 1959).

4. See F. E. Shinnar, *In the Bonds of Constraints and Emotions* (Hebrew), p. 98.
5. The doctrine held that West Germany would sever diplomatic relations with any country—except the Soviet Union—that established relations with East Germany; see Introduction, p. xxx.
6. At the time, confidants of Adenauer were conducting secret negotiations with Poland about the establishment of diplomatic relations. In his diary on 20 April 1958, Ben-Gurion wrote that "if they succeed they will abolish the line of no diplomatic relations with countries that recognize East Germany and the fear of the Arabs will diminish; then they will propose diplomatic relations with us."
7. See No. 257.
8. This letter was forwarded by Fischer to the foreign minister (see his memorandum of 25 October 1959, 130.23/3099/24). She noted in its margin: "You know my position. I do not believe it helps when we entreat them so much. In any case, it does no honour to us."

266. Y. Meroz (Cologne) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 26 November 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3099/24

Meroz offers his comments on Israel's efforts to establish diplomatic relations with Germany. In his opinion, Germany is not interested in having these relations, the main consideration being the Arab factor in its various forms, including the East Germany issue. Other relevant factors are the economic situation, the Hallstein doctrine and so on. Another important element, which does not apply to the German government itself but is of some influence, is public opinion. Israel and the Jews are not popular in Germany today, the forces of reaction and antisemitism are on the rise, and in the opinion of many people the reparations agreement was plain robbery. Moreover, the Germans argue that full relations between the two countries are in force in practice. There is diplomatic representation with a recognized status, and relations are normal. Meroz remarks that this argument is not without a grain of truth, though it is in effect nothing more than an excuse.

On the other hand, Germany does not wish to sever its relations with Israel. It cannot afford an open split today. These relations are a most important element in Germany's membership in the Western family of nations, and a crisis with Israel would have immediate repercussions in the United States and in other countries, and not only among the Jews. America's friendship is of more importance to Germany than all the Arab

extortions, and when Germany is faced with a clear-cut decision, it will know where its real interests lie.

Meroz therefore thinks that Israel should force Germany to establish diplomatic relations, even against its will. The Germans should be told that if, within a short period of so many weeks, it does not approach Israel with an offer to establish diplomatic relations immediately, Israel will sever all its relations with Germany, except for the technical implementation of the reparations agreement. All this should be said in talks with government ministers, with the leaders of the Social-Democratic opposition, and with other important figures. A conclusive meeting with the Chancellor should be requested for a final decision to be taken.

Should, however, no solution be reached in this way, then the Israeli mission must be recalled to Israel, all visits must stop, and Germany be denounced at every opportunity. The tactic he proposes does not guarantee success, but there is no other way. A calculated risk should be taken, and in his opinion Germany's fear of a moral crisis will in the end prevail.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 261.
2. Fischer's reply has not been found; in any case Meroz's proposal was not accepted.

267. Y. Meroz (Cologne) to the West European Division and F.E. Shinnar. 27 December 1959

Coded Tel. 680; Inc.: 130.09/2354/8

The attack on the synagogue in Cologne[1] has aroused great indignation, as evident from the hundreds of telegrams from all sectors of the public and the authorities, expressing regret and revulsion. Radio and television have also devoted programs to this event. Two of the perpetrators caught are members of the Deutsche Reichspartei.[2] Policemen have been stationed at all the endangered buildings, including that of the Israel mission in Cologne. The police are investigating a possible connection between that party and the East German government.[3]

Notes

1. In this telegram (25 December 1959, 130.09/2354/8) Meroz reported briefly on the

desecration of the synagogue in Cologne. This was the first in a series of antisemitic incidents in Germany and other countries. See Vol. 14, chapter 22.

2. The extreme right-wing Deutsche Reichspartei.
3. In another telegram, Meroz reported that a current of thought had been evident recently among a number of politicians and journalists that maintaining normal relations with Israel would serve as decisive proof of the Bonn government's sincerity in its fight against antisemitism. Even those who had in the past been known to pile up arguments against recognition were now adhering to this line. (See telegram 690, 29 December 1959, ibid.)

268. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 February 1958

Coded Tel. 66; Inc.: 130.09/2348/3

Tsur reports that the minister of foreign affairs stayed in Paris on her way to Africa[1] and had meetings with Houphouet-Boigny[2] and Pineau,[3] as well as with Israel's heads of mission in Western Europe. She also held a press conference.

Houphouet-Boigny expressed his opinions on the gradual development of the African countries in order to prepare them for independence. He asked for Israel's cooperation and guidance.

Pineau said: "We shall remain loyal to Israel, whatever happens". He dwelt on the disputes between France and its Anglo-Saxon allies, who do not let France take part in their consultations on Middle Eastern issues on the grounds that the Arabs regard France as their enemy.

Mrs. Meir attended a meeting of the Israeli heads of mission in Western Europe.[8] The meeting discussed the unification movement in the Arab world[9] and the Soviet Union's relations with Israel. Regarding the first subject, it was agreed that the unions should not be actively opposed, but the Arabs as well as the Powers should not be left with the impression that Israel will not react to aggression and provocation under any circumstances. As to the relations with the Soviet Union, it was decided to refrain from spreading the fear of a possible direct or indirect attack by the Soviets on Israel among the Jewish communities and friendly governments. At the same time, the importance of a public declaration on an immediate reaction to a possible hostile act by the Soviet Union should be made clear to the Powers, so that the Soviets should not disregard the probability of a conflagration in the Middle East turning into a worldwide conflict. The wish for an improvement of relations should be constantly demonstrated. As to the situation of the

Jewish communities, it is recognized that now is the time to launch an information campaign. Concern was also expressed about the new communist-Arab plan in Israel.[11]

The press conference[12] was attended by many journalists and the minister's speech was given wide publicity.

Notes

1. Golda Meir passed through Paris en route to her tour of West Africa; see chapter 17.
2. Félix Houphouet-Boigny, minister of health in the French government until June 1958 and mayor of the city of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast.
3. Christian Pinau, French foreign minister until April 1958.
4. On 8 February 1958, French planes bombed the Tunisian village of Sakhiet Sidi Youssef, on the Algerian border, which the French alleged served as a base for the Algeria rebels. Many civilians were killed. The United States and Great Britain offered to mediate between the parties.
5. Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with France in November 1956 after the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt.
6. The Three Powers' Declaration, published on 25 May 1950 by United States, Great Britain, and France, guaranteed the peace and stability in the Middle East. See Vol. 5, No. 248.
7. Vladimir A. Vinogradov, the Soviet ambassador to France.
8. On the occasion of Meir's stopover in Paris, a conference of the heads of the Israel missions in Western Europe was convened there.
9. The union between Egypt and Syria (the United Arab Republic) and that between Iraq and Jordan.
10. Binyamin Eliav, a civil servant employed by an agency that disseminated information about the Jews of Eastern Europe.
11. In early 1958, leaders of the Israel Communist Party (Maki) visited Moscow. They were told to urge the Arab minority in Israel to begin an active struggle for liberation "from the yoke of imperialism" as part of an Arab national movement that would also include the fraternal Communist parties in Arab countries. At a rally in the Arab village of Ara'ara in February, Communist M.K. Emil Habibi said that "there is no force that can deny the Palestinian people its right to self-determination." See *Davar*, 11 February 1958.
12. At a press conference in Paris on 24 February, Golda Meir said that if the Arab unions were interested in peace Israel would accept them sympathetically; if they were intended to augment tensions, however, this would be cause for concern in Israel. Israel was ready to sign non-aggression pacts with Arab countries if they were not ready for peace treaties. In response to a question as to whether Israel was interested in a formal alliance with France she said that Israel very much appreciated the friendship between the two countries but would not initiate such an alliance. (See *Davar*, 25 February 1958.)

269. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 1 June 1958

Coded Tel. 292; Outg.: 130.09/2384/4

Fischer instructs the ambassador in Paris to transmit a message to the new government immediately after the vote of confidence is taken.[1] He must be among the first envoys to do so, preferably the fifth in line. Two versions of the message are given, one for the case of a national unity government with Socialist participation being formed,[2] and the second for the opposite case. [For the full text of the messages, see Main Volume, pp. 491-492.]

Notes

1. A rebellion by the French colonists in France, supported by the military, broke out in May 1958 and brought France to the brink of civil war. In an attempt to save the republic from falling into the hands of an authoritarian military clique, the political leaders decided to place the country's destiny in the hands of Charles de Gaulle. On 31 May President René Coty asked him to form a new government, which won a parliamentary vote of confidence on 1 June.
2. The Socialist Party was represented in de Gaulle's government.
3. For de Gaulle's reply, see No. 272.

270. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister.[1] 10 June 1958

Coded Tel. 712; Inc.: 130.09/2348/3

According to Tsur, everything points to de Gaulle's sympathetic attitude towards Israel. He bases his opinion on past conversations with de Gaulle[3] and on the pronouncements of members of his entourage, and also on his policy of uncompromising opposition to the F.L.N.[4] and to their supporter, Nasser. He also wishes to preserve France's footholds in the Middle East, which necessarily implies the strengthening of the friendly bonds with Israel. At the same time, another school of opinion has it that, with the incorporation of the Algerians in metropolitan France and the resulting presence of some 100 Muslim representatives in the Chamber of Deputies, and with the wish to improve relations with Tunisia and Morocco, de Gaulle might be brought to distance himself from Israel. Tsur does not agree with this analysis, but he thinks a certain reserve may be shown in future demonstrations of friendship towards Israel.

Notes

1. Also sent to the foreign minister and to M. Fischer.
2. Several paragraphs about the domestic situation in France have been omitted.
3. Tsur had been habit of meeting with de Gaulle when the latter held no official position. After the Sinai campaign the latter expressed a positive reaction about the operation.
4. The F.L.N.–the French initials of the National Liberation Front–was the movement fighting for Algerian independence.

271. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister.[1] 10 June 1958

Coded Tel. 713; Inc.: 130.09/2348/3

Following his previous telegram,[2] Tsur suggests certain lines of action in view of the latest developments in France. From the composition of the new government and the opinions of its members he concludes that there is no danger of any difficulties arising in the implementation of the deals and the understandings on procurement, nuclear cooperation,[3] and financial matters. On the other hand, in view of de Gaulle's dominant position and his having the final word in all important issues, it would be desirable to have direct access to the president. He is now the only statesman in the West capable of taking a bold initiative on the Middle Eastern issues and persuading his allies to follow his lead. It is therefore very important to lay before him Israel's opinions on these matters and also on other issues unconnected with the Middle East, including relations with Asian and African countries. He proposes that the prime minister take the initiative and write to de Gaulle after Israel has defined its plans,[4] and that the two leaders meet later in person.[5]

Notes

1. Also sent to the foreign minister and to M. Fischer.
2. No. 270.
3. In October 1956, Israel obtained French agreement to help set up a nuclear reactor at Dimona. For details of the nuclear relations between Israel and France see Shimon Peres, *Battling for Peace*, pp. 130, 140-142.
4. Because of the Middle East crisis, Ben-Gurion did not send a note to de Gaulle until July 1958; see No. 31.
5. Fischer replied that Ben-Gurion was not inclined to have a meeting with de Gaulle, but no decision had been taken as yet. (See his letter to Tsur, 22 June 1958, 130.23/3120/23.) Because of the crisis in the Middle East it was decided to send Golda Meir to meet with de Gaulle; see No. 277.

272. Ch. de Gaulle [Paris] to D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem). 15 June 1958

Note

1. See No. 269.

273. Meeting: M. Fischer–P. Gilbert. 19 June 1958 (document dated 22 June 1958)

Report: 130.23/3120/21

Gilbert told Fischer that he had a very satisfactory stay in Paris. He met the leaders of the new regime, including de Gaulle, with whom the meeting was short and cordial but not businesslike. Gilbert thinks that de Gaulle will be the one to decide on all matters. One should abandon the practice of informal contacts and the sort of activity adopted by Asher Ben Natan.[2] In spite of his limiting his meetings as much as possible, de Gaulle has agreed to meet Israeli representatives in order to carry out a "tour d'horizon" with them. Gilbert thinks this opportunity should be thoroughly exploited, because a similar one may not occur in the near future. After having consulted Couve de Murville and Joxe, Gilbert suggests that Israel be represented at that meeting by the minister of foreign affairs and the director-general of the ministry of defence. Fischer adds his impression that the idea of this meeting has already been brought up before de Gaulle, and he therefore strongly recommends it.

Gilbert also said that relations between France and Israel were discussed at a cabinet meeting, and that five minutes sufficed to decide to carry on with the present policy and to implement all commitments to Israel.

Notes

1. Several paragraphs dealing with the domestic situation in France have been omitted.
2. Asher (Arthur) Ben-Natan, the defence ministry representative in Europe, whose office was in Paris.
3. Elkana Gali, the *Davar* correspondent in Paris. See, for example, his article of 17 June 1958, which concludes as follows: "Circles at the Quai d'Orsay emphasize that even if a number of experts again try to prove that normalization of relations with the Arabs requires downplaying official expressions of friendship for Israel, there is

no chance this opinion would find support in the government. De Gaulle, along with most of the ministers and military leaders, are sincere and steadfast in their opinion that they should continue the close ties with Israel. The foreign minister made this clear to the senior officials of his ministry and the Middle East Division after he discussed the matter with de Gaulle."

4. A plane carrying Israeli arms destined for a country in Latin America was forced to make an emergency landing in Algeria in February 1958. There was suspicion that the weapons were intended for the Algerian rebels. After discussions between Israel and France, the cargo was confiscated and the plane was allowed to return to Israel.
5. Louis Mongin (spelling uncertain) was the chef de cabinet of Defence Minister Bourgèss-Maunoury.

274. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and M. Fischer. 28 July 1958

Coded Tel. 90; Inc.: 130.09/2348/28

At his meeting with the French minister of foreign affairs, Couve de Murville, Tsur discussed a new date for Mrs. Meir's planned visit,[1] which had been delayed owing to her indisposition. The talk then turned to the Middle Eastern crisis. De Murville said that France wishes to hold the summit conference outside the framework of the Security Council, but the British and the Americans disagree. The Soviets feel the same as the French, but they are playing a transparent game of provoking dissent among the Western Powers. In any case, France would insist that the Israelis be invited to the discussions if the Arabs are, though they prefer that neither party be present.[3] France would in effect prevent any discussion of an Israeli-Arab settlement from taking place because the Powers had no right to impose any such settlement. It is futile to try and appease Nasser, and an act of folly to enter into negotiations with him on the future of the region. As to Jordan and Lebanon, the French believe that Lebanon can still be saved but think that Jordan cannot survive in the long run.

De Murville asked what Israel's reaction would be should Jordan disintegrate. Surely Israel would not wish to annex the Western Bank with all its population? Tsur replied that this would presumably be one of the subjects to be discussed with Mrs. Meir. He added that, from the military point of view, only Israel and Turkey can be depended on to repulse any attack by the Arabs. As to a possible attack by the Soviets, only the West would be able to contain it, but he personally does not believe this eventuality will arise.

Notes

1. For the meeting with de Gaulle; see No. 271 and n. 5 there.
2. For the message, dated 26 July, see No. 32.
3. In the end the summit conference did not take place.
4. The landing of American forces in Lebanon in July 1958.

275. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 July 1958

Coded Tel. 114; Inc.: 130.09/2348/6

Tsur transmits a message from de Gaulle to Ben-Gurion, in which he thanks him for his letter of 26 July[1] and says that he will be happy to meet Mrs Meir, the minister of foreign affairs.[2] The prime minister read with great interest Ben-Gurion's analysis of the situation in the Middle East and thinks that progress may be achieved under certain conditions. It seems to him that the main thing is to ensure the territorial stability of the Middle Eastern countries and to maintain the principle of non-intervention in these countries' internal affairs. It is also necessary to take into account, with a conscientious and reasonable approach, current views on a more equitable allocation of the natural resources of the region. All the above stands in no contradiction to the efforts to obtain effective guarantees for the security of the Israeli nation. De Gaulle concludes by declaring that the French attitude is one of sympathy to and admiration of Israel.

Notes

1. No. 32. See also No. 274.
2. See No. 277.

276. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and M. Fischer. 31 July 1958

Coded Tel. 116; Inc.: 130.09/2348/6

De Gaulle's letter[1] is very typical of him, well thought-out in form and content. The main point is in the last line, where what he says about

friendship to and admiration of Israel is clear and unequivocal. De Gaulle does not refer at all to the plan laid out in the prime minister's letter,[2] both because he will be discussing it with Mrs. Meir and because he does not wish to commit himself. The message also confirms what had been previously reported by the embassy, namely, that the Anglo-Saxon tactics of simple containment do not appeal to the General, whose imagination reaches to a different social and political future. A point of protocol should also be noted. At the beginning of the letter, it is said that Mrs. Meir will come to have talks with the minister of foreign affairs, while he, de Gaulle, "will be happy to meet her". This has nothing to do with de Gaulle's "regal" affectations: the General usually stresses that the responsibility for foreign affairs lies with his foreign minister, and he does not wish to encroach on the latter's province.

Notes

1. No. 275.
2. Improving Israeli relations with the countries of the Middle East periphery. For the Note from the prime minister, see No. 32.

277. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister and the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 August 1958

Coded Tel. 146; Inc.: 130.09/2348/6

At Mrs. Meir's meeting with de Gaulle, Couve de Murville and Tsur were also present. After an exchange of courtesies, Mrs. Meir reviewed Israel's opinions on the situation in the Middle East. She said that what was happening there would affect the entire world. The policy of the Western Powers is fraught with mistakes. It has not managed to stand up to two forces acting in the Middle East: Communism and Nasserism. The ideology of Nasserism is to dominate the Middle East, and the Western policy of appeasing this regime is wrong.

Mrs. Meir then turned to discussing Israel's security problems. Israel has two demands—high quality arms which could successfully confront the Arab armament, and unambiguous guarantees by the Western Powers which should obviate the need to use these arms.

De Gaulle referred to the second demand and said a guarantee for the territorial integrity of the Middle Eastern countries might be given as a

result of the planned summit conference. In that event, United Nations forces could be stationed in a number of sensitive points, such as the Old City of Jerusalem. He asked Mrs. Meir what she knew about the position of Britain and the United States in the matter of the guarantees, and stressed that "Israel's security and integrity are important to France". Mrs. Meir briefed the General on the American position as reflected in conversations and letters, and added that they had good intentions but had not yet expressed them publicly. As for the British, Israel does not trust them.

De Gaulle then turned to an analysis of the situation in the Middle East. He said that Israel has nothing to fear from the Arabs. Their aggressiveness is mostly vocal, and he therefore feels no concern about Israel's existence unless the Soviets intervene directly with their forces–and then not only the Middle East would be in danger. He said again: "Be assured that France is committed to Israel's existence within its present borders and wishes that the close and friendly relations be maintained... what was done by the previous governments was advantageous to both Israel and France. The French people have not changed their attitude, and this is also the position of the present government".

He said he had perused Ben-Gurion's message[3] and found it contained interesting ideas. However, these should be studied thoroughly and weighed. He ended by stressing that it is in everybody's interest to prevent further complications, and he therefore requested all present to avoid discussing or commenting on the present conversation. Strict instructions for the observance of secrecy have been issued by the French Prime Minister's Bureau, and the embassy would likewise do everything possible to keep the Israeli press in the dark.[4]

Notes

1. On the crisis in the Middle East, see chapter 1.
2. See No. 298 and n. 3 there.
3. No. 32.
4. In a telegram supplementing the conversation between the Gaulle and Meir, Tsur wrote, inter alia, that after de Gaulle's remark as to Arabs' inability to attack Israel, Meir had repeated the need for qualitative parity in armaments and that it was natural for Israel to turn again to France with such problems. (See Tsur to the prime minister and director-general of the M.F.A., telegram 149, 6 August 1958, 130.09/2348/6.)

278. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister and the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 August 1958

Coded Tel. 147; Inc.: 130.09/2348/6

A wide range of topics was discussed at a meeting between the minister of foreign affairs and Couve de Murville and senior officials of his ministry.

1) The summit conference and the situation in the Middle East. Mrs. Meir said that she does not believe in an understanding with the Soviet Union. If the summit conference indeed takes place, then only the situation in the region should be discussed insisting on the maintenance of the status quo and non-intervention by the Soviet Union, but no proposals for settling the Israeli-Arab conflict should be put before the conference.

De Murville replied that the French do not have great hopes for the conference, but an attempt should be made to persuade the Soviets to accept the status quo in the Middle East. He also thinks that only a general settlement in the region should be discussed, namely, guarantees for Israel's territorial integrity.

2) The Arab nationalist movement. Mrs. Meir gave an analysis of Nasserism and its aims. She repeated what had been said before, namely, that the only barrier against the spread of Nasserism is an unequivocal security guarantee for, and the military and economic strengthening by the West of, those countries which were prepared to oppose Nasser.

De Murville does not agree with this analysis and said that the French saw the process of Arab unification as a natural one, while Jordan's disintegration, for instance, was seen as the disintegration of an artificial structure. As to the periphery approach, he is sceptical about the internal stability of Iran and Sudan and stressed that the only countries that can be depended on are Turkey and Israel.

3) Guarantees for Israel. The French have no quarrel with the principle, but de Murville asked whether the Three Power Declaration of 1950 was inadequate. Mrs. Meir pointed to the weakness of that declaration, and de Murville agreed that a stronger guarantee is needed that will not give rise to doubts and various interpretations.

4) The arms embargo. It appears that this idea is circulating around the Quai d'Orsay. Mrs. Meir said that the idea carries with it great risk, because the Soviets would not honour the agreement while the West would regard itself as bound by it. Nor would United Nations observers be much good, *vide* Lebanon. These arguments seem to have convinced the French, as was evident also from the talk with Joxe after the meeting.

5) The oil pipeline.[1] Mrs. Meir explained the project, but the French did not react in any way.

6) Arms supply. De Murville said that there has been no change in the policy of the supply of arms. He repeated that statement after the meeting with de Gaulle.

Note

1. See No. 21 and n. 2 there.

279. Editorial Note

The Algeria Debate at the 13th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

On 16 June 1958, a group of Asian and African states asked that the subject of Algeria be placed on the agenda of the 13th session of United Nations General Assembly. On 22 September 1958, the Assembly decided to approve the request, despite objections by France, which asserted that this was a domestic affair. As a result France did not participate in the debate and votes on the subject.

The Algerian problem was also discussed by the First (Political) Committee and in the Assembly plenum; various amendments were offered to the draft resolution submitted by the African and Asians states. The amended text, whose crux was recognition of the Algerian people's right to independence and a call to the parties involved to begin talks aimed at reaching a solution, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, was put to a vote in the General Assembly on 13 December 1958. Thirty-five countries, most of them from Asia and Africa and the communist bloc, voted in favour; 18 voted against, including Israel and countries of Western Europe and Latin America; 28 abstained. The resolution failed to be adopted because it did not obtain the required two-thirds majority. (See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1958, pp. 79–82.)

280. M. Tov (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 December 1958

Coded Tel. X717; Inc.: 130.09/2334/5

Tov reports to Comay on the debates and voting on the Algerian issue. In his opinion, even though the resolution was not adopted, France has come out the loser. Their decision to be absent from the debates and not to assume leadership was a mistake: the arena has been left to the Arabs who have reaped political gains. Similarly, Guinea's secession from the Communauté Française[4] and its admission to the United Nations with France abstaining was a blow to French prestige.

Notes

1. Pursuant to the French position, which held that Algeria was a domestic matter and consequently not within the purview of the United Nations; see the preceding Editorial Note.
2. On the amendments, see *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1958, p. 81.
3. The United States abstained, despite French expectations that it would vote against the resolution.
4. With the establishment of the French Community, which included all of the former French colonies in Africa, Guinea was the only newly independent country that severed all ties with metropolitan France.

281. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 2 February 1959

Coded Tel. 255; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

At a meeting with Joxe, the latter said that de Gaulle's policy on the Middle East is based first and foremost on his determination for France to be involved in every step taken in the region. He learned from the Suez war that France could not act there by itself and that it has to have the agreement and cooperation of its allies. His attention is now centered on Algeria, but that does not mean that he is not interested in other issues, including the Middle East. His attitude towards Israel is clear and constant and there is no fear of its changing.

The affair of Renault's submission to the Arab boycott[2] was also discussed, as were Israel's relations with the European economic organiza-

tions[5] and the debate at the Security Council on the incidents on the northern border.[1] On that he said that the French mission has been instructed to demand of the United Nations steps to put an end to these outbreaks.

Notes

1. In January 1959, a number of incidents took place along the border between Israel and Syria, culminating in the murder of a shepherd from Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan on 23 January. Israel lodged a complaint with the Security Council. On this incident see chapter 6.
2. See chapter 4.
3. In the end the contract was won by a Dutch firm that submitted a lower bid.
4. Pierre Dreyfus, president of Renault.
5. See chapter 14.

282. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 February 1959

Coded Tel. 391; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

The talk with de Gaulle lasted some 30 minutes and was very friendly.[1] De Gaulle said that Israel is now enjoying a period of calm and has no special problems. Neither are there any problems in the relations between the two countries. France has great admiration for Israel and would welcome anything which would make the ties still closer. France would help Israel, but outward manifestations of friendship should be avoided in order not to anger the Arabs. France is having great difficulties in North Africa and these should not be added to. The Renault affair[5] is one of those things that could add to the difficulties. Tsur replied that Israel has agreed to settle the issue without publicity. De Gaulle asked about Israel's activities in Africa and said he was following them with great interest. He also referred to the immigration from Romania[3] and asked whether this would not weaken Israel. He would be happy to meet Ben-Gurion should the latter be passing through Paris.

Notes

1. This was Tsur's first meeting with de Gaulle after the latter was elected president of the republic on 21 December 1958.

2. Only formalities were exchanged at that meeting.
3. See chapter 18.
4. No. 32.
5. See chapter 4.

283. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister and the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 February 1959

Coded Tel. 393; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

Tsur adds details following the meeting with de Gaulle.[1] The President had praised Israel to Gilbert. He stressed that France would always support Israel in an emergency, but it had no intention of heading a crusade against the Arabs.

Malraux told Tsur that the reserve typifying de Gaulle's words is characteristic, as he is careful not to commit himself. He will extend help if the circumstances call for it, but again, he does not wish to commit himself. Malraux stressed that de Gaulle's attitude to Israel is more favourable than might appear from his words.

Tsur, however, is not entirely satisfied. He fears that this attitude of cautious reserve may be wrongly interpreted by the services, and by the Quai d'Orsay in particular. His view is confirmed by Couve de Murville's reserved attitude. In addition, de Gaulle's remark about the Renault affair is not encouraging, as it shows appeasement of the Arabs. Tsur thinks that, in the aftermath of the meeting, Israel must adopt an unambiguous position regarding the public movement in Israel for a formal treaty with France.[2] He suggests that the prime minister issue a cautious but clear statement in the Knesset in which he may stress that Israel sees no contradiction between France's friendship towards Israel and its friendly relations with other states in the Middle East. As to a visit by the prime minister, de Gaulle responded favourably and with no reservations to the hint dropped by Tsur at the meeting. True, this was not exactly an invitation but only the expression of a wish to talk with the prime minister should he be passing through Paris. But in view of this response Tsur will take up the subject with Debré.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 282.
2. In November 1956, after the Suez war, a committee was established in Paris to work for a formal Franco-Israeli alliance. The Governments of France and Israel were not

disposed to this, because of their recognition of the diplomatic limitations and disadvantages associated with a written and formal pact between the two countries and because of considerations of domestic politics: in both countries the initiative for an alliance was led by right-wing groups–in practice a coalition between the proponents of Algérie française in France and members of Herut in Israel.

3. See No. 284.

284. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 February 1959

Coded Tel. 424; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

The talk with Debré was very friendly indeed. The latter stressed his friendship towards Israel and his wish to be of assistance. He spoke with concern about the international situation but pointed out that it is only in the Middle East that there has been an improvement in the situation, resulting from the Soviets being disenchanted with Nasser and Qassim and the disunity among the Arab states, which is evident to all. Tsur requested that he tell him frankly what France's policy towards Israel was, and he replied: "I want you to be very clear about one thing, and that is–no matter who heads the government in France our attitude towards Israel cannot change. We see Israel as a pioneer, a moral test case...". As to Tsur's misgivings about de Gaulle's caution, he explained that the president does not want to add to the difficulties facing him in the negotiations with the leaders of the F.L.N. whose headquarters are at present in Cairo. He again requested Tsur to convey to Ben-Gurion that France has been and still is a loyal friend to Israel to its utmost capability. As to Ben-Gurion's visit, he said that "they already thought about that", but Tsur, as instructed, did not press him on that point.[2]

Notes

1. This telegram has not been found.
2. Eytan cabled to Tsur (telegram 569, 23 February 1959, 130.09/2349/3): When you meet with Debré do not mention a visit by the P.M. The P.M. believes that nothing in particular is currently on the agenda and does not believe that they will invite him. Accordingly it is better to leave the matter alone for the moment.

285. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 27 February 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3120/23II

Tsur reports that he has been very busy for the last few weeks making contacts and meeting with the new establishment. Though the majority of those met are friendly to Israel, this is not an easy task because the administration of the policy is now divided between the official government and the president's entourage. The importance of these contacts has increased because of the perceptibly growing coolness in the relations with the Quai d'Orsay, and in particular with the foreign minister, Couve de Murville. The general conclusion from all these meetings is that friendship towards Israel is as strong as it was before and that there is no room for concern at the governmental level. The talk with Debré supports this conclusion.

Tsur is surprised at the cool attitude to the planning of Ben-Gurion's visit, or, at the very least, to an exchange of notes between the Ben-Gurion and de Gaulle, reflected in the telegrams from Jerusalem.[3] He considers this contact to be vital, even if there is at present no serious problem in the relations between the two countries. The prime minister's visit could put an end to the activity of Herut and Soustelle.[4] It is just as important to arrange for some of the majority leaders in the Chamber of Deputies and some government ministers and officials to visit Israel.[6]

Notes

1. Renault's surrender to the Arab boycott; see chapter 4.
2. Financial matters were discussed during the visit, including the completion of the French loan to Israel and the Renault affair. With regard to the latter he promised to try to find a compromise between the two sides. (See Tsur to the M.F.A., telegram 209, 23 January 1959, 130.09/2349/2.)
3. See No. 284 and n. 2 there.
4. Soustelle was the head of the Franco-Israel alliance committee in France; Begin, of the parallel committee in Israel.
5. In an editorial in *Le Monde* on 4 February 1959, the leaders of the Israeli opposition were castigated for coming to France to conduct a campaign on behalf of an alliance, in order to further their propaganda during the forthcoming elections in Israel. (See Israel embassy in Paris to the M.F.A. 4 February 1959, telegram 274, 130.09/2349/2.)
6. Fischer responded and said that the M.F.A. supported Tsur's position and was delighted that he had succeeded in obtaining the prime minister's consent for the visit. He assumed that de Gaulle's personal position, as expressed in Tsur's report, had frightened Ben-Gurion a bit; but once he had given the green light the meeting depended on obtaining an invitation from Debré. (See the letter from Fischer to

Tsur, 1 March 1959, 130.23/3120/23II.) Ben-Gurion and de Gaulle did not meet until June 1960; see Vol. 14, No. 250.

286. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to D. Ben-Gurion, G. Meir and W. Eytan (Jerusalem). 3 March 1959

Copy: 130.23/3120/23II

Gilbert is back from a fortnight's visit to Paris, where he met with the top people of the administration.

He found Couve de Murville irritated and angry with Israel. He complained that the Israelis are pestering everybody and that the fuss the Herut members are raising about the alliance makes people very indignant.[1] The French have enough problems of their own and they simply refuse to be dragged into Israel's affairs. De Murville is delaying the signing of the cultural treaty[2] between the two countries because, as he claimed, the Israelis are making such a fuss about it as if it were a military treaty.

De Gaulle showed great interest in Israel. He asked about the prospects for peace and said: "I have great sympathy and affection for Israel ... If Israel's existence is endangered I shall come to its help and I shall act promptly and decisively. On the other hand, I do not wish to be identified with Israel... I have no illusions about the Arab world... but I do not wish to be put at the head of a crusade against the Arabs". [For the full text in French, see Main Volume, p. 516.]

Debré also complained about the fuss the Israelis are making and about the activities of the Herut members. He said that the attention of the French is now focussed on the Berlin crisis and the Algerian issue. The Israelis are lucky in that Soustelle is in charge of atomic energy matters and therefore cooperation with Israel will continue. Israel will also depend on the present general command of the military forces.

Gilbert talked with Soustelle and discussed with him Herut's activities in the matter of the alliance. Soustelle is very bitter against those who criticize his activity, but promises to keep a lower profile in order not to embarrass the Government of Israel.

All the people interviewed advised him to end his mission in Israel.

Gilbert concludes that the prime minister's visit to France must be arranged. Israel should weigh carefully the appointment of its next ambassador in Paris. The dry dock in Haifa should be handed over to the French.[4] There is no need for concern about the opening of an Israeli consulate in Dakar,[5] because the delay is purely a matter of bureaucracy.

Notes

1. See No. 283 and n. 2 there.
2. Tsur replied that Gilbert's descriptions were extremely exaggerated and that he had heard from the head of the department for cultural relations that "Couve [de Murville] is quite skeptical about the value of cultural treaties and hesitates to sign them. . . . Since he assumed his post Couve has yet to sign a single cultural treaty." (See Tsur to the M.F.A., telegram 526, 12 March 1959, 130.09/2349/2.)
3. One sentence has been omitted.
4. See No. 281 and n. 3 there.
5. France refused to permit Israel to open a consulate in Dakar, despite repeated Israeli requests to do so. The reason given was that this would lead to a similar request by the United Arab Republic. Israel ascribed great importance to opening a consulate in Dakar because that city was going to serve as the capital of the planned Mali Federation between Senegal and the French Sudan—both of them Muslim countries. The Israeli request was finally approved in late 1959. See also No. 289 and n. 2 there.

287. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 13 March 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3120/23II

Tsur disagrees with Gilbert about the latter's assessment of de Murville's attitude towards Israel. He thinks Gilbert's report on his talk with de Murville is not accurate. It does not stand to reason that the latter, who is a cautious and calculating diplomat, would express himself as quoted by Gilbert. It is true that Tsur considers de Murville less easy than any foreign minister he has had dealings with before, but it would be dangerous to see in him an antisemite and an enemy of Israel. Tsur thinks de Murville is simply acting under instructions from General de Gaulle's cabinet. And, indeed, from a talk with de Courcel,[4] the director of that cabinet, one can see that it would be unrealistic to talk of this or that minister's independent policy. It is de Gaulle who runs the show, and there is enough data to show what his attitude towards Israel is.[5]

Notes

1. No. 286.
2. See No. 282.
3. See No. 284.
4. De Courcel, de Gaulle's chef de cabinet, told Tsur as follows: "The time when officials and embassies make announcements on their own initiative has passed, and so too the period when the foreign minister conducts his own foreign policy, which at

times is at variance with that of the president. France now has a single policy and the different ministries implement it." (See Tsur to Fischer, 6 March 1959, 130.23/3120/27.)

5. To this letter Fischer replied that because Couve was not sympathetic and Israel had to rely on the directions he received from the Gaulle, he favoured the idea of a meeting between de Gaulle and Ben-Gurion. "I actually do think that the 'old men' will find a common language in the field of the African vision." (See Fischer to Tsur, 16 March 1959, 130.23/3120/23II.)

288. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 18 March 1959

Coded Tel. 562; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

At a meeting with Couve de Murville, Mrs. Meir raised the subject of the cultural treaty.[1] De Murville answered frankly that he is putting off signing the treaty until the negotiations with Egypt on the future of the French schools there are over. He stressed that the delay is temporary, and that he wholeheartedly supports the treaty with Israel. The embassy has issued instructions that the matter be kept secret. The press should be told that the negotiations are proceeding normally and that there are still some points at issue, so the final signing of the treaty may be delayed for a while.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 286 and n. 2 there. (Golda Meir was in Paris just then to promote Israel's attempt to conclude an agreement with NATO.)
2. For further developments in this affair, see No. 292.

289. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Asian and African Division and the West European Division. 18 May 1959

Coded Tel. 840; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

At a meeting with Janot, the secretary-general of the Communauté Française, Tsur raised again the question of the opening of an Israeli consulate in Dakar.[1] Janot promised that his answer would be forthcoming once the form of the organization of the Communauté had been determined.[2] His answer was less reserved than at the previous meeting.

He said he personally is in favour of a consulate there and that he will speak about it with le Court, the minister in charge of the Communauté. Tsur has decided he will speak with le Court personally.

Tsur also spoke on the principle of cooperation in Africa and said it seems to him that there are differences of opinion among the French on that subject. Janot replied that he personally is in favour of such cooperation, but he will bring the matter to de Gaulle in order to have the policy decided on. He requested that Tsur submit a memorandum on Israel's activities in Africa.

Notes

1. See No. 286 and n. 5 there.
2. In February 1959, Tsur and Shneerson heard from Sebilleau and Janot that the French Community ministry took the position that the various institutions of the community had to be established first and their authority defined. (See Shneerson to the M.F.A., telegram 432, 25 February 1959, 130.09/2349/2.) On 23 September, Shneerson again raised the matter with Janot, who said that it depended on the Foreign Ministry. When Shneerson noted that the Quai d'Orsay had expressed a positive opinion, his interlocutor promised to speed up the process as much as possible. The subject was also raised in a conversation that Fischer and Shneerson conducted with the secretary-general of the French Foreign Ministry, de Carbonnel, who promised a speedy response. (See Shneerson to the M.F.A., telegram 499, 24 September 1949, ibid.) French approval for the opening of an Israeli consulate in Dakar was not forthcoming until late 1959; the consulate opened its doors in early 1960.

290. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister.[1] 27 May 1959

Coded Tel. 890; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

Tsur's parting visit from de Gaulle lasted 40 minutes and was friendly and cordial. The president said he hoped to come to Israel, whose development he has always followed with interest. In his opinion, Israel's initial period of danger and crises is over, and now its existence is a fact recognized by everybody, including the Arab states. Relations between Israel and France are excellent and he is convinced they will remain so. He is also certain that current issues, such as the cultural treaty, will find their solution in due course. He expressed interest in Israel's activities in Africa and wonders why Israel is putting so much effort into them. Tsur gave him the appropriate explanations. The General spoke about the international situation, and said

he doubts whether the Geneva conference[4] and the planned summit conference will have any useful results. In any case, he does not expect that Middle Eastern issues will be debated there.

Notes

1. Sent also to Walter Eytan and Maurice Fischer.
2. See No. 270 and n. 3 there.
3. See No. 289.
4. The conference was held in May 1959, with the participation of the foreign ministers of the three Western powers and the Soviet Union. It dealt with the problems of Berlin, German reunification, and European security.
5. Guy Mollet, who was premier at the time of the Sinai Campaign, visited Israel in May 1959. In a speech in Tel Aviv he declared that de Gaulle had told him that had he been in office in 1956 he would have acted exactly the same way. He added that de Gaulle had asked him to say that in its daily struggle for survival Israel could count on assistance from France. Should an emergency arise, Israel could rely on France to help, as it had in the past. (See *Ha'aretz*, 17 May 1959). A similar message was conveyed by the new French ambassador to Israel; see No. 297.
6. See No. 288.
7. The negotiations with Egypt on implementation of the August 1958 agreement about the return of French institutions in Egypt to French control; see No. 292, n. 2.

291. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 23 June 1959

Coded Tel. 999; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

At Tsur's parting meeting from Debré, several subjects were discussed. Debré said that he sees a significant change in Nasser's standing in world affairs. The same can be said about the Arab nationalist movement, now that even the Soviet Union is not particularly enthusiastic about it. It appears that the Soviet Union has been disenchanted with nationalist movements in general, and that it fears that they will be taken over by China. The French also have misgivings about China and its influence in the developing countries. Debré thinks that Europe's main task now is to aid these countries and to prevent a takeover by China. He is aware of Israel's activity in these countries and thinks it should be encouraged. Tsur reminded him in this context of the delay in opening the consulate in Dakar, and Debré promised to take care of that. He also referred to the Algerian issue and in this connection strongly criticized the United States for not

supporting the French position, and in general for its lack of leadership. He concluded with the expression of his hope to pay a visit to Israel.

Notes

1. See chapter 3.
2. See Nos. 277 and 278.
3. Ambassador Tsur visited Algeria and the Sahara in June 1959 as the guest of General Challe, the French military commander in Algeria.

292. M. Shneerson (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 July 1959.

Coded Tel. 126; Inc.: 130.09/2349/4

At a meeting with Shneerson, Seydoux said that the French wish to postpone the signing of the cultural treaty for two or three months until after the beginning of the school year at French institutions in Egypt,[2] in order not to give the Egyptians an excuse for creating difficulties.

Shneerson replied that this proposal meant surrender to Egyptian pressure. Who can guarantee that similar pressure will not be applied also in October? Israel has learnt at first-hand that it is useless to appease the Arabs.

Shneerson reported on this conversation to the minister of foreign affairs[3] who instructed him not to importune the French any more, but to wait until they approach Israel on their own initiative. At the same time, he should tell the French that the delay in signing the treaty does not allow Israel to take the steps necessary to extend the study of the French language for the coming new school year.

Notes

1. See No. 288.
2. On 22 August 1958, in Zurich, Egypt and France signed an agreement to regularize the economic, financial, and cultural relations between two countries, which had been suspended after the French invasion of Egypt in November 1956. Inter alia it was stipulated that French cultural institutions in Egypt, which had been closed at the time of the Suez crisis, would be re-opened, including the lycées in Cairo and several other cities and the French Archeological Institute in Cairo.

3. Foreign Minister Meir was then in Paris for a meeting with the emperor of Ethiopia (which did not take place in the end; see No. 293).
4. When Meir met with Joxe, the secretary-general of the French Foreign Ministry, on 23 July, she was told that because of the importance they attached to the agreement it had been decided to initial it on 25 July, but asked that this not be publicized. (See telegrams from Shneerson, 149 and 169, 23 and 27 July, 130.09/2349/4.)

293. M. Shneerson (Paris) to W. Eytan. 24 July 1959

Orig.: 130.15/3754/4

Shneerson reports on the motives behind the French objection to a meeting in Paris between Mrs. Meir and the Ethiopian emperor. Firstly, the French had not been aware of the Ethiopians' wish to hold such a meeting. Presumably, if they had been informed of this in advance, they would not have objected. Secondly, de Gaulle's France attaches great importance to matters of protocol and ceremony, and it is not the accepted form for a personal guest of the president, staying at an official residence, to play host to a minister of a foreign country. Thirdly, the French are not interested in creating the impression that there is some connection between their policy and the relations between Israel and Ethiopia and that there is something "cooking", even though the interests of the two countries touching the Red Sea and its environs are identical. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to make other arrangements for a meeting at another venue.

Notes

1. In this telegram Eytan wrote that he did not understand why French objected to a meeting between the Ethiopian emperor and Golda Meir on French territory. (See Eytan to Shneerson, telegram 123, 24 July 1959, 130.15/373/4.) On the incident, see chapter 16.
2. Yalma Darsa, the foreign minister of Ethiopia.
3. Abte Wold Akale Worq, Ethiopian ambassador in France.

294. M. Shneerson (Paris) to M. Fischer. 4 December 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3121/4

Shneerson transmits the signed copy of the cultural treaty between France and Israel,[1] finally endorsed on 30 November. It is a happy conclusion to a long, drawn-out affair of procrastination by the French, who found new excuses daily to put off signing the treaty–though it was clear, following Couve de Murville's promise to Mrs. Meir, that it was only a matter of time. After the affair had become public knowledge, the French decided it was best to sign the treaty and close the subject. They have only been waiting for a good opportunity, and this came about following the argument with the Arabs at the United Nations and their new ambassador being accredited to Israel.[5] The fact of the signing was announced to the press and the radio, but it is clear that the French do not wish to make a big to-do over it. They have avoided according any political significance to the treaty, saying that it is one of the 25 cultural treaties they have with countries all over the world.

Notes

1. The text of the treaty, in French and in Hebrew, is in File 130.23/3121/4.
2. See Nos. 288 and 292.
3. France was about to open a law faculty at the university in Beirut.
4. See No. 288.
5. Jean Bourdeillette, the French ambassador in Israel from December 1959.
6. Two paragraphs dealing with relations between the Israel embassy and Israeli correspondents in Paris have been omitted.

295. M. Shneerson (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 December 1959

Coded Tel. 952; Inc.: 130.09/2349/4

Further to his previous telegram,[1] Shneerson has just been notified by the Quai d'Orsay that Couve de Murville has ordered a retraction of what he had been told previously at the ministry. The French have now decided to vote for the resolution, whether a separate vote is taken on the additional paragraph, or whether the entire resolution is put to the vote. And they will not object to having the Article from the 1948 Resolution cited. They still

argue that citing this Article will not have any practical results, but a vote against it or any objection would only draw attention to it and accord to it an importance that it does not have. Moreover, as member of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, they cannot put themselves in the impossible situation of having objected to it when the Commission resumes its work. Shneerson has used all the arguments available, but has been told that the decision is final.

Note

1. In this telegram (Shneerson to the M.F.A., 5 December 1959, 130.15/3753/4), Shneerson replied to the telegram from the M.F.A. (Ministry Bulletin 32, 3 December 1959, 130.09/2378/2) which reported that the Americans were planning to suggest a modification of the draft resolution on extending the mandate of UNRWA; this would revive the Palestine Conciliation Commission and charge it with investigating the possibility of implementing the article (No. 11) in the 1948 General Assembly resolution dealing with the refugees. (On this affair, see chapter 5.) The embassy was asked to contact the Foreign Ministry and ask it to exert pressure on the Americans to deter them from this step. When Shneerson contacted the Quai d'Orsay he was told that they agreed that the paragraph proposed by the Americans was superfluous and harmful, but the latter were determined. If a separate vote were held on the paragraph France would abstain, explaining that in the new circumstances the 1948 resolution was not effective and would not alleviate the refugees' problems. If the vote were on the resolution as a whole, the French would vote in favour, but would state that they had reservations about the paragraph.

296. Ch. Yahil (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 6 December 1959

Coded Tel. 846; Outg.: 130.09/2349/5

Yahil refers to Shneerson's telegram on his talks at the Quai d'Orsay regarding the draft resolution on the refugees.[1] He suggests that Shneerson express Israel's disappointment and bitterness. Israel has supported France on every subject raised at the United Nations even though this has put its standing in Africa at risk, while the French are disregarding Israel's request on an issue that was most vital to it.

Notes

1. See No. 295.
2. The draft resolution on UNRWA, including the paragraph about the Palestine Conciliation Commission, was passed by the General Assembly on 9 December 1959. Eighty countries voted in favour and only Israel abstained; see No. 152, appendix B.

297. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to M. Shneerson (Paris). 14 December 1959

Copy: 130.02/4321/7

The new French ambassador[1] has presented a copy of his credentials to the minister of foreign affairs. He brought with him a message from de Gaulle, saying that the latter remembers their meeting in Paris[2] and wishes to assure Mrs. Meir that France's policy towards Israel is as it always has been. In an emergency, France would always be at Israel's side. Regarding the Renault affair, he was surprised to hear what the director of the minister's cabinet[3] told Shneerson, and considers that this statement does not reflect the position of the French government.

Notes

1. Jean Bourdeillette, the French ambassador in Israel from December 1959.
2. See No. 277.
3. Gillet, Couve de Murville's chef de cabinet, told Shneerson on behalf of the minister that Ilin, the head of Kaiser Frazier, intended to sue Renault for a billion and half francs in damages and was about to file the papers. The repercussions of such a suit were liable to muddy the waters and it was feared it would influence relations between the two countries, particularly in the economic and commercial arena. Accordingly the French believed that a compromise should be worked out and Ilin persuaded not to sue. (See Shneerson to the minister of foreign affairs, telegram 947, 4 December 1959, 130.09/2349/4.) Meir replied that "it is incomprehensible that we are asked to intervene with an independent and private company when the Government of France has claimed that it has no power to intervene in the affairs of a state-owned company." See Meir to the Israel embassy in Paris, telegram 855, 7 December 1959, 130.09/2349/5.)

298. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 16 January 1958

Copy: 130.02/4321/6

The minister of foreign affairs replies to Elath's letter of 3 December, 1957,[1] in which he complained about the decline in the status of the London embassy.

Mrs. Meir points out that, in spite of Israel's disillusionment with Britain, it has not abandoned the hope that some day there will be a change in Britain's attitude. In the meantime, she sees the tasks of the embassy as follows: creating a sympathetic public opinion; guarding against the revival of the Guildhall Plan; gathering reports on international developments; and establishing contacts with Asian and African states. This last point is of particular importance, because London serves as the centre of the British Commonwealth and is home to tens of thousands of students from the developing countries.

Notes

1. In this letter (in File 130.23/3098/5), Elath wrote that several people in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs had told him that in light of Britain's hostile attitude toward Israel there was no reason to give the Israel embassy in London the same attention merited by the embassies in Washington and Paris. Elath noted that relations between Great Britain and Israel should not be dismissed lightly, neither should the importance of Israeli actions in Britain be deprecated or their scope reduced. It followed that the embassy in London should be strengthened as much as possible and not be weakened.
2. The reference is to the talks between the commander of British land forces in the Middle East, General Robertson, and Ben-Gurion in February 1951, during which the idea of integrating Israel in Middle Eastern defence was floated. Ben-Gurion had even said that Israel-Britain relations in times of crisis should be similar to those between Great Britain and Australia and New Zealand. (See Vol. 6, Nos. 68 and 72.)
3. Speaking at the Guildhall in London on 9 November 1955, the then-prime minister, Sir Anthony Eden, said that if Israel and its neighbours could conclude a border agreement, Britain—and, he believed, the United States and other powers as well—would be willing to provide formal guarantees to both sides. In order to achieve peace it would be necessary to find a compromise between the Arab countries, who advocated the boundaries of the 1947 partition resolution, and Israel, which insisted on the present lines. The British government and he himself were prepared to offer their services in this matter. In response, Ben-Gurion told the Knesset on 15 November 1955 that Eden's idea of truncating Israel's borders lacked any legal or moral basis and was inconceivable. Instead of promoting understanding he would only encourage and exacerbate the aggression by the Arab states and make the

prospects of peace in the Middle East even more remote. (See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, First Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XIX, pp. 1325.)

4. The conference met between 25 December 1957 and 1 January 1958 at a non-governmental level. In its resolutions Israel was defined as "an imperialistic base"; see also No. 340 and n. 5 there.
5. No reply to this letter has been found.
6. A number of paragraphs dealing with administrative matters have been omitted.

299. E. Elath (London) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 21 January 1958

Coded Tel. 661; Inc.: 130.09/2322/2

Elath reports on an unofficial talk with Hayter in which the relations between Israel and Britain were discussed,[1] mainly in the light of reports on the revival of the Guildhall plan and the vigorously critical reactions to these reports appearing in Israel's press. Elath stressed the complex background to the relations between Israel and Britain and said the direction in which these relations develop depends on Britain.

This talk convinced Elath that Israel's firm stand against the revival of the Guildhall plan had a major role in foiling Britain's schemes. Britain feels obliged to mollify Israel, mainly with words but also in a practical way by releasing the items of procurement[5] and by holding talks with Shek.[6] However, Elath thinks that Israel's attitude towards Britain should not be purely negative. It is important to suggest certain practical ways of improving relations with the British, thus testing their sincerity and demonstrating Israel's friendly attitude. It would be best if the first proposals were in the financial, rather than the military or political, sphere.

Notes

1. This was Elath's second meeting with Hayter in January 1958. On the first occasion, on 7 January, Elath said that should the British attempt to promote their stand on the Guildhall program at the Baghdad pact conference (scheduled for the end of January in Ankara), not only would they thereby widen the abyss that had yawned between Great Britain and Israel since publication of the plan, they would also cause serious harm to general stability in the region. Hayter replied that the British had no operative plan for solving the problem of relations between Israel and the Arabs and would not make any proposals at the conference. Only a "madman" could imagine imposing the Guildhall program on Israel by force. (See Elath to the M.F.A., telegram 614, 7 January 1958, 130.09/2322/2.)

2. The reference is to the meeting between Elath and Selwyn Lloyd on 10 December 1957. Elath gathered from his interlocutor's remarks that Eden in his Guildhall speech had been referring to border rectifications between Israel and Arab countries and not to unilateral concessions by Israel. But when he asked Lloyd whether he was authorized to so inform his government the foreign secretary seemed to hesitate and finally did not reply. (See Elath to the M.F.A., telegram 527, 10 December 1957, 130.09/2321/8.)
3. The reference is to Elath's conversation with the permanent under-secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar, on 6 December 1957. The under-secretary said that Great Britain's position on the subject of Israel-Arab relations had been defined by Eden in his Guildhall speech and its policy continued to be based on what was said then. (See Elath to the M.F.A., telegram 520, 6 December 1957, 130.09/2321/8.)
4. In the meeting between Lloyd and Elath (see n. 2 above), Elath conveyed a message from Mrs. Meir that "we hear incessantly from various visitors to Israel that the Guildhall plan is still on the table. There is great anxiety in the government." (See the minister's bureau to the Israel embassy in London, telegram 572, 28 November 1957, 130.09/2321/5.) At the beginning of the meeting Elath said that Britain should know that implementation of the Guildhall plan would require the use of force against Israel.
5. The reference is to three night-fighters and cannon for torpedo boats; see the memorandum from Ofer to Comay, 24 January 1958, 130.23/3098/15.
6. See, for example, Shek to the M.F.A. (telegram 656, 20 January 1958, 130.09/2322/2), in which he reports that Hadow had told him that there was disagreement in the Foreign Office as to whether it was worthwhile to indicate at the Baghdad Pact conference the positive role that Israel was playing in the defence of the Middle East against the Soviet Union. Some held that it would be impolitic to raise the matter at the conference itself and that it should be mentioned only in private conversations with the Turks and Iraqis.

300. M. Ofer (Jerusalem) to M. Comay (Geneva). 6 March 1958

Copy: 130.23/3098/4

Ofer reports on certain developments which have lately occupied the British Commonwealth Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The political debate in Parliament has aroused interest. Selwyn Lloyd's speech was of course unfriendly, but that did not surprise the Division. In contrast, Gaitskell's and Bevan's speeches were very satisfactory.[1]

The reports on the unions between several of the Arab states, and that between Iraq and Jordan in particular, have been the subject of discussions in Israel and in London. The embassy in London has not intervened with the British (though the embassy in Washington did approach the administration

on the matter), but in routine talks the British lay stress on promises made to them that the borders will remain quiet. To the argument that Iraq is not a signatory to the armistice agreement, the British reply that this problem will find its solution within the framework of the United Nations and with the aid of the secretary-general. These vague statements do not satisfy the minister of foreign affairs, and in a talk with Rundall she demanded that Britain take effective steps to prevent the development of tension. The result was that the British have begun to give Shek more details, and have shown him telegrams received at the Foreign Office. These have confirmed the intelligence Israel has, and even added to it.

More major British firms are withdrawing from Israel. The Oil Refineries Company has announced it is liquidating its business in Israel, and the Iraq Petroleum Company has also announced its intention of selling its installations in Haifa.

Notes

1. In a debate in the House of Commons on 20 February 1958, Bevan attacked the Guildhall speech as inciting the Arabs and preventing progress toward a settlement between them and Israel. He quoted Gaitskell's remark that the Labour Party rejected any settlement based on territorial concessions by Israel and would oppose the government policy of the based on the Guildhall address. Lloyd, replying on behalf of the government, declared that guarantees for Israel's borders would stir up angry hostility to Britain in the Arab world. Elath concluded from the debate that there had been no change in British policy toward Israel and that it was still based on the Guildhall address. (See Elath to the British Commonwealth Division, telegram 827, 20 February 1958, 130.09/2322/3.)
2. Comay had gone to Geneva to head the Israeli delegation to the Conference on the Law of the Sea.
3. The meeting took place on 27 February 1958; see No. 189.

301. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister.[1] 11 August 1958

Coded Tel. 576; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath sums up the talks between the minister of foreign affairs and Selwyn Lloyd.[2]

1) The latter has solemnly announced that following the fall of the regime in Iraq prospects have grown brighter for improved relations and better understanding between Israel and Britain.
2) The Guildhall plan has been abandoned and a new chapter in Anglo-

Israeli relations has been opened. Lloyd will refrain from submitting proposals for the solution of the conflict between Israel and its neighbours.

3) Regarding guarantees, Lloyd understands Israel's position but will have to consult with Dulles.[3]
4) The Foreign Office has approved in principle the sale of submarines and half-tracks to Israel.[4]
5) The present arrangement regarding the overflights is satisfactory, but they might have to reconsider it should the situation in Jordan deteriorate.

Selwyn Lloyd is leaving for New York tomorrow, and Mrs. Meir requests to inform Eban to have Dulles prepared for a discussion on the guarantees.

Notes

1. Sent also to Walter Eytan and the British Commonwealth Division.
2. On 11 August 1958, Golda Meir held two meetings with her British counterpart Selwyn Lloyd. A complete report of the first conversation is in File 130.23/3098/5II. No record of the second meeting, dealing with arms procurement, has been found.
3. See No. 302.
4. Shimon Peres came to London to continue the procurement talks. In his meetings it was agreed that Israel would purchase two submarines and a number of Centurion tanks, 20 ready for sale and evidently another 35 as a loan. Peres noted that this time he sensed a conspicuous effort on the British side to satisfy Israel. (See his telegram to the chief of the general staff, 643, 28 August 1959, 130.09/2322/3.) For more on Israeli weapons requests, see No. 51 and n. 2 there.
5. No. 302.

302. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister.[1] 12 August 1958

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath gives more details of Mrs. Meir's talks at the Foreign Office.[2,3]

Lloyd said the first objective is to eradicate the suspicions that have prevailed during the last few years. A new situation has developed in the Middle East which requires cooperation between Israel and Britain, and for that mutual trust is essential, as are consultations on every issue arising. He explained and justified the Guildhall policy. There never has been, he said, any real intention to carve off pieces of Israel: the only aim has been to convince the parties that they have to reach a settlement. But now that

policy has been abandoned and a new chapter has been opened in Anglo-Israeli relations, Britain is not planning to propose, in future, any change in Israel's boundaries. Any settlement will have to be agreed on by both parties.

The situation in the Middle East was then discussed. Mrs. Meir explained Israel's stand and Nasser's aims, and also proposed a number of steps to improve the situation. Lloyd said he agreed with her totally: "You are preaching to the converted", he said.

Mrs. Meir then raised the issue of guarantees for Israel, and Lloyd replied he would have to consult with Dulles. She added that a stop must be put to the ambitions of Khrushchev and Nasser. Lloyd replied that this line applies to the NATO countries, to Turkey and to Israel, but does not solve the problem of the weak countries, such as Libya, which could be undermined from within. Mrs. Meir answered that in this case other means are necessary: bolstering up these regimes, banning propaganda and the smuggling of arms. Lloyd concurs with these ideas and proposed a counter-propaganda campaign.

Lloyd then heard explanations from the minister of foreign affairs about the overflights. He thanked her for the help so far extended by Israel, and said he does not wish the issue to grow out of proportion. He said that perhaps an agreement on a working basis could be reached, and added that Israel will be approached only in case of an emergency.

Notes

1. The telegram was sent also to Walter Eytan and the British Commonwealth Division of the Foreign Ministry and to the Israel embassies in Washington, Paris, and Rome.
2. No. 301.
3. The report of this conversation is in File 130.23/3098/5II.
4. See No. 301 and n. 4 there.
5. See No. 41.

303. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 16 August 1958

Coded Tel. NWT958; Inc.: 130.09/2339/9

Eban met Selwyn Lloyd,[1] who has come over for the General Assembly session. He touched only on two points in connection with the debate. First, the West must not yield to pressure for a hasty and ill-planned withdrawal,

in order not to bolster the myth of the West being expelled under Soviet threat, as happened in 1957. Second, it is most important for the Assembly to confirm the principle of the independence and territorial integrity of member states.

Eban then raised the issue of guarantees, and stated that everything which had so far been said to Israel is unsatisfactory. It has all been said vaguely and behind closed doors, and therefore can in no way serve as a deterrent to the Soviet Union. Lloyd said the Americans cannot go further without Congress's approval, which should call for intervention also in the case of non-communist aggression. He showed interest in the fact that the Americans speak not only about Israel's "independence" but also about its "integrity". He said that perhaps Britain would also mention this concept in a speech or statement at the next opportunity.

Eban asked Lloyd to tell Dulles clearly that Britain has acceded to Israel's request for the sale of arms, and also that the United States should take steps to ensure that the West offers solid and comprehensive guarantees to Israel. Lloyd replied that he would inform Dulles of his support for the principle of maintaining Israel's strength. The present situation in Britain is that the sale of the submarines and the half-tracks has been approved,[2] but the question of the Centurion tanks remains problematic because of Jordan's reaction. Lloyd said that Israel has also requested jet planes and bombers from Britain.

Notes

1. Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd came to New York to take part in the emergency session of the General Assembly on the crisis in the Middle East.
2. See No. 301 and n. 4 there.
3. See No. 37.

304. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister.[1]
18 August 1958

Coded Tel. 597; Inc.: 130.09/2322/2

Elath gives his assessment of Mrs. Meir's talks with Selwyn Lloyd.

1) Elath has information that the initiative for inviting the minister of foreign affairs to London came not from the Foreign Office, but straight from Macmillan. From this he concludes that future relations, in particular

the practical aspects, which will be handled by the Foreign Office, will be problematic and difficult, even if Macmillan's and Lloyd's attitudes remain favourable towards Israel.

2) His talks with Lloyd and Macmillan before Mrs. Meir's visit point to the clear conclusion that the reasons for the shift in the British attitude are as follows: (1) the presence of British forces in Jordan, (2) growing concern about Britain's standing in the Middle East, (3) the collapse of Nuri al-Sa'id's regime in Iraq, (4) the wish to improve the relations with Israel so that a more amicable atmosphere between the two countries can facilitate the new role that Israel may be called upon to play. This leads to the conclusion that future relations with Britain will depend not on established formulas but on ongoing developments in the Middle East.

3) The retreat from the Guildhall policy and Lloyd's statement about "a new chapter having been opened" are an achievement for Israel both from the practical point of view and as a matter of principle. But as long as no effective guarantees have been received for Israel's territorial integrity they must be viewed as the removal of an obstacle and not as a fulfilment of Israel's demands. At the same time, Elath does not think that there will be any progress on guarantees as long as the Americans do not make the first move.

4) Suggestions for future action: Macmillan's personal promise in his letter to Elath—"to take up the thread and pursue it further myself"[3]—should be exploited to the full. Pressure should continue to be applied especially in respect of procurement of arms, but also in the economic and financial spheres. Care must be taken, however, not to let the demands in the other spheres overshadow the main concern: arms.

Notes

1. Sent also to the foreign minister and the British Commonwealth Division.
2. See No. 17.
3. Macmillan's letter was sent after his meeting with Elath; see No. 51. The letter is in File 130.23/3098/5II.
4. See No. 21 and n. 2 there.

305. E. Elath (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 2 September 1958

Coded Tel. 674; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath refers to Mrs. Meir's talk with Rundall.[1] He was asked by Hadow of the Foreign Office about this talk and his opinion requested. Elath replied that the prime minister's proposal applies to the possibility of Jordan's collapse, when Israel's security would be at risk and defensive measures would be required. Israel would be happy if such an eventuality did not occur, but if such a situation should arise it would be important to reach an understanding about Israel's position. He added that Israel will support all of Britain's efforts to prevent such a collapse.

Hadow replied that the prime minister's proposal has not yet been discussed at the Foreign Office, but personally he envisages two difficulties: (1) military action by Israel, even if taken in support of the British forces, would be construed by the Arab states as a conspiracy between Britain and Israel and this would harm Britain's interests, (2) even if Israel's military action met with success, it would put at risk its political standing, because there would be no prospect of attaining the necessary majority of votes at the United Nations.

Notes

1. At the meeting, Meir asked Rundall, on behalf of the prime minister, to inquire what the British position would be if, following the disintegration of Jordan, the I.D.F. were to occupy portions of the West Bank–specifically, the Old City, Mt. Scopus, and certain peaks deemed vital to the defence of Israel. (See Loker to the Israel embassy in London, telegram 506, 1 September 1958, 130.09/2322/1).
2. See n. 1 above.

306. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 25 September 1958

Coded Tel. 611; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

The ministry briefs the embassy on the minister of foreign affairs' talk with Selwyn Lloyd in New York.[1] The subject was the possibility of the supply of British tanks to Israel with American financing. Lloyd said that their

standing in Jordan demands that Israel obtain the tanks from another supplier. However, after hearing that the matter could be kept secret at least until the tanks had arrived in Israel, he promised to raise the matter with Dulles.[2] Lloyd was told that the number of tanks involved was 55. He then said that if these tanks were supplied to Israel Jordan would demand a like number for free.

The evacuation of the British forces from Jordan was then discussed. Lloyd said that he would be able to announce the date of the beginning of the evacuation in a few days' time. The British think that Nasser will call off his blockade of Jordan. Nasser and Fawzi have even announced that Egypt and Iraq have no intention of taking over in Jordan. The subversive broadcasts from Cairo have stopped, though they are still going on from Syria. These developments, including the appointment of a roving ambassador by the secretary-general of the United Nations, will enable the British to consider evacuating their forces. There is coordination with the Americans about the evacuation of Lebanon and Jordan and also with Jordan about the announcements on the evacuation.

Notes

1. The two statesmen were in New York for the 13th session of the United Nations General Assembly.
2. After the meeting between Dulles and Lloyd, the British told Golda Meir that Lloyd had decided to approve the sale of 55 tanks (see Meir to D. Ben-Gurion and Eytan, telegram 49, 26 September 1958, 130.09/2339/9). The British and Americans knew that the burden of financing the sale would fall on the latter (see Meir to Comay and Eytan, X366, 30 September 1958, 130.09/2334/4). On 3 October, the M.F.A. was informed officially by the British embassy in Israel that it had been decided in principle to sell Israel 55 Centurion tanks, 20 at once and the others within a few months (see Comay to the Israel missions in New York and London, telegram 728, 3 October 1958, 130.09/2322/1). On the basis of a British document from a later period, it seems that Britain agreed to sell Israel 60 tanks in 1958. (See record of the conversation with Shimon Peres at the British Foreign Office, 15 March 1960, PRO, PREM11/3400.) On the American aspect of the affair, see No. 216 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 55 (Editorial Note).

307. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the U. N. and the Israel Embassy in London. 7 October 1958

Coded Tel. TNW732; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

Comay reports on his talk with Ms. Salt of the British embassy, who came to "consult" with him on how the evacuation should be carried out. Their intention is to fly out the forces over Syria and to load the heavy equipment on to ships at Aqaba. Nasser has already agreed to the overflight of Syria. The British are still hesitating whether to use this way or to approach Israel again and find out about the possibilities of transferring troops through Israeli territory. They do not wish Israel to get the impression that they are approached only when there is no alternative or that they are ignored when other possibilities exist. The British also wish to have an alternative route available should the overflight of Syria meet with difficulties owing to Syrian inefficiency.

Comay replied that he would have to consult in the ministry on this matter, but at this point he wished to make some personal and noncommittal remarks. Israel has, in principle, no desire for the overflight to take place over its territory, unless it is absolutely necessary. Among the reasons for this are internal sensitivities in Israel, and the general delicacy of the matter itself. The evacuation is connected with a General Assembly resolution[1] about which Israel is not enthusiastic. Also, the present approach is being made after Britain has already come to an agreement with the U.A.R. and the secretary-general of the United Nations; hence it is a moot point whether Israel should conduct future negotiations on this matter with Britain or with the United Nations. In any case, Nasser's interest lies in the evacuation being carried out as quickly as possible, and it is therefore improbable that his people will create any difficulties. Even should there be some technical hitches, this would still not justify involving Israel in the process.

Comay thinks this matter may come up for discussion in the government meeting.[2]

Notes

1. On the General Assembly resolution, see No. 55 (Editorial Note).
2. Later Comay conveyed the prime minister's reaction to Rundall: "We prefer that they use Aqaba or Syria or both; but should it become clear that there is no other appropriate alternative and it is essential to turn to us, we will respond in the affirmative." (See Comay to the mission in New York and the embassy in London, telegram 676, 10 October 1958, 130.09/2322/1.)

308. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 30 October 1958

Coded Tel.: 731; Outg.: 130.09/2322/1

Rundall has asked the minister of foreign affairs to clarify the statement made by the prime minister to the *Sunday Times*.[1] Mrs. Meir said she supposed that the prime minister wanted not only to give his personal opinion but also to emphasize the fact that Israel does not wish to take over the West Bank with all its population. Rundall asked whether the prime minister considered this a package deal, that is: Do guarantees for Israel and the implementation of Article VIII go together, or could demilitarization and the stationing of United Nations forces be considered in the first stage? Mrs. Meir replied that the guarantees and the implementation of Article VIII were Israel's demands at the beginning, while demilitarization and stationing United Nations forces would be considered as a possibility only if the status quo were upset. In any case, Israel is interested in maintaining the status quo.

Rundall welcomes the fact that a public statement supporting a peaceful settlement of the conflict is on record. Would Israel be prepared to concede something to Jordan in exchange for such an arrangement? Mrs. Meir replied that such a solution is also to Jordan's advantage and no special price should be paid for it by Israel.

Talking about the situation in Jordan, Rundall commented that there is now in London an atmosphere of "cautious optimism" regarding Jordan. The situation has calmed down, and Rifa'i is keeping a tight rein there. It is a pity that the United Nations has not insisted on stopping the subversive broadcasts.

The meeting concluded with a general discussion on developments in the region and on Mrs. Meir's impressions of the United Nations General Assembly.

Note

1. In response to the reporter's question as to what the government's attitude would be to changes in Jordan, Ben-Gurion replied that the Government of Israel did not deal in hypothetical questions, but his personal opinion was that the entry of Egyptian or Iraqi troops to the West Bank must be prevented. Should the situation in Jordan change, the United Nations would have to guarantee and supervise the demilitarization of the West Bank. Ben-Gurion also spoke about Great Power guarantees for Israel's borders and its request of the Government of Jordan and the United Nations to implement Article VIII of the Armistice Agreement. (See Eytan to Israel Missions Abroad, Ministry Bulletin 290, 27 October 1958, 130 to 09/2378/8.)

Article VIII deals with the establishment of the joint Jordanian-Israeli committee to consider arrangements such as the renewal of normal activity and free access to Israeli institutions on Mt. Scopus, use of the cemetery on the Mount of Olives, and the renewal of operation by the pumping station at Latrun.

309. F.B.A. Rundall (Tel Aviv) to G. Meir (Jerusalem). 6 November 1958

Notes

1. Golda Meir jotted in the margin of this document: "Urgent, copy to the prime minister. I will ask for a draft reply soon." See also No. 310.
2. See No. 307.

310. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to S. Lloyd (London). 12 November 1958

Notes

1. See No. 309.
2. In November 1958, the Board of Deputies held a festive dinner for the Israel ambassador to mark the conclusion of the events in Britain marking Israel's tenth anniversary. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who attended the dinner, gave a speech in which he lauded the contribution of the foreign minister's visit to London to the encouraging advance in Israel-Britain relations. (See Liveran to the minister of foreign affairs and others, telegram 972, 6 November 1958, 130.09/2322/3.)
3. On 10 November, King Hussein's plane was attacked by two MiG fighters of the United Arab Republic while he was crossing Syrian airspace en route to a vacation in Europe. The pilot managed to evade them and land the king safely back in Jordan.
4. See No. 308.

311. E. Elath (London) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.[1] 20 November 1958

Coded Tel. 44; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath has had a general talk with Selwyn Lloyd on Anglo-Israeli relations and the situation in the Middle East. Lloyd thanks Mrs. Meir for her letter[2] and its friendly tone. He adds that he had noted its last sentence and will discuss it with Macmillan.[3] He requests that Israel refrain from giving too much publicity to the arms deal because this provides Nasser with ammunition for his propaganda against Britain. Elath has agreed, and gave the example of the supply of 200 half-tracks which took place quietly and without publicity.[4]

They also discussed the situation in Sudan[5] following the revolution there. Elath said the first stage of the revolution has been successfully implemented, but there is a group of young officers leaning towards Nasser who constitute a danger to the new regime. Israel is helping in the sale of Sudan cotton and Britain's help in this is also important.

Lloyd asked about the situation in Israel and was told that economic relations between the two countries should grow closer. Elath pointed to the difficulties confronting Israel in mobilizing investment from Britain and cited the instance of the Bonds. Lloyd replied that he is willing to help in the matter and requested a memorandum on this subject. The talk ended with a discussion of Romanian Jewish immigration to Israel.[6]

Notes

1. Sent also to the British Commonwealth Division and M. Bartur.
2. See also No. 310.
3. In another letter from Lloyd to Meir (dated 21 November, in File 130.23/3098/5), the foreign secretary promised to give thought to the last section in Meir's letter (about Jordan) and to express his opinion on the matter.
4. On 1 October 1958, an agreement was signed for Britain to supply 200 half-tracks to Israel.
5. On 17 November 1958, a military coup took place in the Sudan. A military dictatorship was set up under the leadership of General Abbud, who was fairly moderate and conservative.
6. See No. 504 and n. 4 there.
7. Joyce Doran, the wife of the British air attaché in Israel, was murdered on 19 November 1958 near the point where the Jordan River flows into the Sea of Galilee, evidently by infiltrators from Syria.

312. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan[1] (Jerusalem). 31 December 1958

Coded Tel. 216; Inc.: 130.09/2322/3

Elath briefs Eytan on the instructions given should the tanks deal be revealed. Every effort will be made to keep the transaction secret, but should it leak out the embassy will refuse to comment. The British have prepared a statement to the effect that this is a small shipment on which negotiations had begun as early as 1955, and it conforms to the principles of the 1950 Three Powers' Declaration.[3] It will also stress the fact that Israel has received fewer than half the number of tanks supplied to Egypt for free in 1955 and 1956, and fewer than one-sixth of the number supplied to Iraq, mostly gratis. The deal is of a purely commercial nature, not a loan or a grant.

Notes

1. Sent also to the British Commonwealth Division and to Shimon Peres.
2. The General Assembly resolution of November 1956, following the Sinai Campaign and the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, which forbade, inter alia, the shipment of military supplies to the combat zone.
3. The statement and the full briefing can be found in Liveran to the minister of foreign affairs and others, telegram 74, 26 November 1958, 130.09/2322/3.
4. The M.F.A.'s confirmation was sent in a telegram from Comay to the Israel embassy in London, 952, 1 January 1959, 130.09/2322/4.

313. M. Comay (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 16 January 1959

Coded Tel. 995; Outg.: 130.09/2322/4

Comay refers to Elath's telegram[1] reporting on consultation in the embassy on the improvement in the relations between Britain and the U.A.R.[2] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the minister herself agree with Elath's conclusions, but have some comments to make:

1) It might perhaps be preferable, from Israel's point of view, that the financial negotiations and those on restoring diplomatic relations between Britain and the U.A.R.[2] come to a dead end, but then a vacuum would be

created in Cairo, which would be filled by other Western elements more willing to appease Nasser. If the British have decided to renew their diplomatic relations with Egypt then it is useless to try to prevent this, or to make it appear as a defeat for Israel. It would be preferable to concentrate on the substance of the relations between the two countries rather than attempt to sabotage the renewal of the diplomatic relations between them.[3]

2) The problem is that this move by the British follows a number of other steps intended to curry favour with Egypt, such as the visits by Rountree[4] and Fanfani,[5] the agreement on the sale of American wheat,[6] and other moves that create the impression of a process of a gradual rapprochement between the West and the U.A.R. If the British wish to avoid this impression, they should take a number of steps to reduce the harm done by the agreements with Nasser. The assumption is that Macmillan or Lloyd will make a statement in the Commons and that the Foreign Office will issue statements addressed to other governments and also brief the press. Elath should see to it that these statements, both the diplomatic ones and those intended for the wider public, refute the idea that there has been any change in Britain's policy in the region or vis-à-vis Nasserism.

3) This clarification should also prevent Nasser from claiming the latest moves as a political victory.

4) There are other countries, with interests identical to those of Israel, who view with anxiety the strengthening of Nasser. These include first of all the periphery states: Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia. Israel will try to have them react in an analogous way. It will also be necessary to exchange views with other Western countries, for instance with the United States and France. Elath is requested to exercise discretion in consulting with these countries.

Notes

1. In this telegram Elath reported on the consultation at the embassy concerning the improvement of relations between Britain and the United Arab Republic. Elath said that it was undesirable that the impression be conveyed that Israel was opposed to normal relations between Britain and Arab countries as a matter of principle, lest the British government and public conclude that friendly relations between Britain and Israel ruled out any possibility of similar relations between Britain and the Arabs—and vice versa. (The telegram, dated 13 January 1959, is in File 130.23/3098/5.)
2. On 28 February 1959 Great Britain and the U.A.R. signed an agreement. Its most important section involved the release of the frozen sterling balances of the U.A.R. in Britain and the U.A.R.'s promise to compensate British subjects whose property had been nationalized.
3. Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the U.A.R. were restored on 1 December 1959 at the level of chargés d'affaires (ambassadors were not exchanged until 1961).

4. Rountree visited Cairo in December 1958 during his tour of the Middle East.
5. The prime minister of Italy, Amintore Fanfani, visited Cairo in January 1959.
6. On 24 December 1958, an agreement for the sale of American wheat to the U.A.R. was signed in Cairo.

314. E. Elath (London) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Commonwealth Division. 22 January 1959

Coded Tel. 334; Inc.: 130.09/2322/5

Stevens had a meeting with Elath prior to leaving for the ministerial council of the Baghdad Pact, to be followed by a visit to Israel.[2] The latest agreements between Britain and the U.A.R. were discussed.[1] Elath said that Israel thought Britain's wish to normalize its relations with the Arab states natural and desirable, and that it contributed to stability in the region. However, this should not come about at Israel's expense or that of other countries in the Middle East. Israel should continue to be briefed on Britain's policy in the region, in accordance with the promise made to the minister of foreign affairs, in order to maintain and buttress the feeling of trust between the two countries.

Stevens replied that he wholly agreed with the statement that there is no contradiction between good relations with Israel and with the Arab states. The understanding reached between the two countries on the occasion of Mrs. Meir's visit is firm and established, and they will continue to inform Israel about their policies and to clarify them. Israel should have no fear of its interests being harmed in order to appease Nasser, who should be treated with due respect but also with caution. He should be given the opportunity of demonstrating that his intentions are not aggressive. His behaviour will be tested on the following four fronts: Iraq and the Persian Gulf, Israel, Jordan, and Africa.

A discussion then took place on what Stevens called "certain changes for the better" in Nasser's attitude and the possibility of renewing diplomatic relations between Britain and the U.A.R.

Notes

1. See No. 313 and notes there.
2. Stevens visited Israel after the conference of the Council of Ministers of the Baghdad Pact, held in Karachi between 26 and 28 January. In his meeting with the minister of foreign affairs and the director-general of the ministry, on 5 February, he spoke of

matters associated with the Middle East and Israel-Britain relations. (See Comay to the Israel embassy in London, telegram 60, 7 February 1959, 130.09/2322/4.)

3. During their meeting in London in August 1958; see Nos. 301 and 302.
4. An oasis in the Arabian Peninsula. When it began to seem there might be oil there, Great Britain, as the holder of a protectorate over the emirates of Abu Dhabi and of Muscat and Oman, and Saudi Arabia began disputing sovereignty over it. The area was occupied in 1955 by military forces of the emirates, under British command. Saudi Arabia protested the action. When it severed relations with Britain in 1956, on account of the Suez Campaign, it announced that it would not renew relations as long as the problem of Bureimi had not been resolved.

315. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister.[1] 28 April 1959

Coded Tel. 771; Inc.: 130.09/2322/5

At Elath's meeting with Selwyn Lloyd, the latter began by reviewing recent developments in the Middle East. The British do not trust Nasser and do not rely on his ability to serve as a bulwark against the Communists. He continues to conspire against the West wherever he can. The British are trying to persuade the Americans not to extend economic aid to Nasser, but there are differences of opinion on that in the Administration. As to Iraq, though Qassim himself is not a Communist, the Communists have seized power in all spheres of public life, which could bring about civil war there. Hussein paid a visit to Britain and gave the impression of being more stable and mature. The British tried to persuade him to cooperate with Israel in keeping the peace along the borders and in sharing the waters of the Jordan. Hussein replied that he was all for tranquil borders but would not commit himself on the water issue.

Lloyd said that he personally and the Foreign Office have made every effort to help mobilize investments in Israel in the amount of one million pounds sterling. Elath thanked him and asked for support against the Arab boycott. Lloyd said that their Ambassador in Iraq[2] has protested against the boycotting of the Iraq Petroleum Company there. Lloyd stressed that Britain's position on this issue is clear and firm.

Elath told Lloyd that he has been instructed to go to East Africa in order to promote Israel's relations with the countries there, and asked whether there would be any objection to such a visit. Lloyd said there would be no objection on his part, but that he would have to consult with the Colonial Office before giving an official answer.[4]

Elath mentioned the British opposition to displaying the Centurion tanks in the Independence Day parade,[6] and Lloyd promised to reconsider this issue.

Notes

1. Sent also to the minister of foreign affairs, the British Commonwealth Division, and the Israel embassy in Paris.
2. Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, the British ambassador in Baghdad.
3. Iraq banned the import of products of Imperial Chemical Industries (I.C.I.), alleging that the company also sold to Israel.
4. On the affair, see No. 480.
5. See No. 310 and n. 2 there.
6. The matter was first raised with Shek; see his telegram to the M.F.A., telegram 695, 14 April 1959, 130.09/2322/5. The British insisted that the Centurions not be displayed. Israel conceded the point and Golda Meir commented: "The matter is not that important." (See her telegram to the Israel embassy in London, telegram 324, 6 May 1959, 130.09/2322/4.)

316. E. Elath (London) to the Prime Minister.[1] 10 September 1959

Coded Tel. 294; Inc.: 130.09/2322/7

Elath paid a farewell visit to the prime minister before the close of his term of service in Britain. Macmillan expressed his satisfaction at the state of the relations between the two countries and promises to maintain and strengthen them if he is re-elected.[2] Britain has to safeguard numerous interests in the Middle East, but this will not be done at Israel's expense. He analyzed the situation in the Middle East and said the conflicts there are insoluble because the Arabs cannot be depended on. He has never believed in Arab unity and he can discern no signs of such a process taking place. He expressed his great admiration for Israel and its achievements, and also expressed his appreciation of Elath's personality and work.

Notes

1. Sent also to Walter Eytan and British Commonwealth Division.
2. General elections were held in Britain on 8 October. The Conservatives won and Macmillan was returned as prime minister.
3. The report has not been found.

317. A. Liveran (London) to Z. Loker (Jerusalem). 21 October 1959

Coded Tel. 488; 130.09/2322/7

Following his briefing from Israel,[1] Liveran spoke with Beith about the Centurion tanks.[2] He said Israel has been informed that the Egyptians are not interested in purchasing these tanks. He also explained that Israel's request was not intended solely to hinder the Egyptian deal, but was the result of a genuine wish to acquire such tanks.

Beith replied that Britain does not wish to intervene in the deal with South Africa and that the decision on the tanks rests with that country. Livran said that all Israel's efforts to acquire these tanks have met with failure and that British intervention is necessary. After a lengthy discussion, Beith promised to write a memorandum which would include Israel's arguments. He promised to brief Liveran on developments the following week.

Notes

1. According to this telegram (dated 19 October, in File 130.09/2322/6), the minister of foreign affairs had met with Ms. Salt of the British embassy and handed her a note about the Centurions. This note has not been found, but it must have dealt with an Israeli request to purchase additional tanks.
2. The reference is to the 200 Centurion tanks that Britain had agreed to sell South Africa, but the latter was not interested in the deal. When this became known to Israel it undertook action to purchase some of these tanks. A report that the U.A.R. was also interested in acquiring them spurred Israel to intensify its efforts.

318. G. Avner (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 December 1959

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2322/7

The embassy has been informed by the Foreign Office that the conclusions reached in the discussion of Israel's request for the tanks are awaiting the approval of the foreign secretary, who will then transmit them to Mrs. Meir.[2] Avner does not have the impression that the answer will be in the negative, and from hints received by the military attaché and the representative of the Ministry of Defence it would appear that the request

will be partially approved. He therefore thinks that no further letter from the minister of foreign affairs to Selwyn Lloyd will be necessary, and that it would be best to await his reply. Only then should Israel raise the issue of the unapproved items. Liveran and Avner have been told that their fear of the tanks being given to Egypt is groundless. Avner also suggests that no negotiations on this matter be started in Paris, because this might bring to the British unwelcome memories of the 1956 war. As to South Africa, the negotiations should best take place there.[3]

Notes

1. Not found.
2. See No. 317.
3. Ultimately the deal was not consummated.

319. Editorial Note

Relations between Israel and Ireland

Ireland recognized Israel de facto on 12 February 1949. As a Catholic country it felt obliged to take account of the Vatican's lukewarm position on Israel. For this reason it refrained from de jure recognition and refused to establish diplomatic relations. Fear of the reaction of Arab countries buttressed Ireland in this position.

In September 1957, Foreign Minister Golda Meir met with her Irish counterpart in New York. The latter expressed agreement in principle to the appointment of an honorary consul in Israel and did not object to Meir's proposal that Israel send a chargé d'affaires to Dublin. There was no sequel to this contact.

In the absence of official representation, the Israel embassy in London handled Israel-Ireland affairs unofficially. There was no practical content to these relations, except for modest commercial ties.

320. E. Haran (Jerusalem) to Sh. Gilat (London). 31 December 1959

Copy: 130.23/3095/18

Haran informs Gilat that the first steps have been taken towards signing a trade agreement with Ireland.[1] This will not be an agreement between states but between private firms. The signatory on the Irish side will be The Irish & Allied Trading Corporation Ltd., which will buy from two Israeli firms goods to the amount of 500,000 pounds sterling during the coming four years. The appendix to the agreement lists the goods to be bought in Israel, excluding citrus. Haran requests that Gilat follow the development of trade between the two countries.[2]

Notes

1. The original erroneously reads "Greece."
2. No answer to this letter has been found.

321. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 10 January 1958

Coded Tel. 12; Inc.: 130.09/2358/3

At Sasson's meeting with Italian President Gronchi, they discussed Bulganin's idea to hold a summit conference and his proposals relating to the Middle East.[1]

Gronchi said that in view of the Soviet Union's interest in the region, the Standing Committee of NATO should discuss the conflicts in the Middle East and find appropriate solutions in order to relieve the tensions and prevent Soviet penetration of the region. He has already submitted his proposal to the Committee and the discussions there have already started. He thinks the conflict must be resolved because it allows the Soviets to penetrate the region. In his opinion, Israel has nothing to fear from the West's efforts to find a solution. He is certain that no Western country, and certainly not Italy, would support any solution which would harm or weaken Israel. Italy has been maintaining contacts on these matters with Arab states; he mentioned Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. These states have not been totally unresponsive to Italy's approach, and he knows that

other Western countries are active in the same sense. In his opinion, the main problem is the refugee issue, and he thinks that Jordan would be able to absorb all or a large part of the refugees within its present borders if it receives financial, political and moral support, and in particular if it has the full support of Saudi Arabia. Israel must therefore make now a goodwill gesture in permitting the repatriation of some 50,000 to 100,000 refugees, in paying compensation to the others, and in coming to an agreement on the Jordan waters. He repeated that in all the conversations he and members of his government have had with the Arabs, they have stressed Israel's right to exist. They have also made it clear that any attempt by the Arabs or by the Soviets to attack Israel would be met by vigorous opposition on the part of the Western states. He was very circumspect in speaking about immigration to Israel, saying this was a matter best left for Israel to decide. At any rate, he thinks that a final delineation of Israel's boundaries could serve as a guarantee against its expansion and would allay the Arabs' fears.

Regarding the general problems of the Middle East, he said Soviet penetration is a very worrying factor which could deprive the West of its economic foothold there. He mentioned Pella's economic plan,[3] and said that time is acting against the West in the economic sphere.

Notes

1. On 8 January 1958, Bulganin sent notes to the heads of government of the NATO countries, suggesting that a summit conference be held within the next two or three months. Among the items on the proposed agenda was an agreement about the Middle East, according to which the powers would do nothing that might infringe upon the independence of the states of the region, would renounce the use of force to settle disputes in the region, would refrain from external intervention in the domestic affairs of the states of the region, and would help reinforce the sovereignty and national independence of the countries of the Middle East.
2. At their meeting in Rome on 17 October 1957; see Sasson to the M.F.A., 19 October 1957, 130.23/3091/9.
3. The reference is to a plan that Pella submitted to Secretary of State Dulles when he visited the United States in December 1957, focusing on the creation of a special Western fund to finance economic enterprises and development projects in the Middle East. (See Sasson to the M.F.A., telegram 82, 29 January 1958, 130.23/3091/15.)

322. J. Prato (Athens) to E. Najar (Jerusalem). 5 February 1958

Coded Tel. 283; Inc.: 130.09/2293/4

Prato has met Greek Foreign Minister Averoff-Tossizza, who repeated what he had said at their previous meeting,[1] recounting in more detail the arguments he had heard from the Arabs:

1) They are concerned about unbounded immigration to Israel.

2) They demand that the refugees be given the right to choose whether to return to Israel or be given compensation and remain where they are at present settled.

3) They demand that Israel retreat to the borders of the partition plan.

Averoff-Tossizza said that he thinks the first two demands are justified, but he totally rejects the third one. To Prato's question, whether the Arabs would be prepared to recognize Israel in exchange for meeting the demands, and to guarantee its security and its freedom of navigation, Averoff-Tossizza replied that "the reactions were not negative".

Prato's reply took the usual form. He raised in a roundabout way the issue of Greece's non-recognition de jure of Israel, and Averoff-Tossizza replied that the situation is not to their liking; the problem lies in Greek interests in Egypt. He also said there is some advantage in this situation, because it enables them to say harsh things to the Arabs.

Note

1. In the meeting with the Greek foreign minister, Averoff-Tossizza, the latter emphasized the great sympathy that Greece felt for Israel, "which is not disturbed by its necessary friendship with the Arabs." A report on the meeting is in a letter from Prato to the M.F.A., 7 January 1958, 130.23/3104/16.

323. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 20 March 1958

Orig. 130.23/3091/10

Sasson has met Italian Minister of Defence Taviani, Shimon Peres also participated. Peres opened by asking why Italy objects to Israel's association as a member of, or an observer in, the committee of the defence ministers of the Western Powers (Germany, France, and Italy). Taviani explained at

length and amicably that this committee works in close cooperation with NATO, while Israel, together with some other definitely Western countries, is not a member of NATO. The committee also has certain economic and security functions and it considers itself part of the other pan-European bodies, such as the European Economic Community, of which Israel is not a member. He therefore thinks there is no justification in co-opting Israel to this committee, just as is the case with Switzerland, Sweden or Austria. Even Britain has been refused membership in this committee. In general, the committee has not yet decided on its aims and plans; but once it has done so, the other members of the European Economic Community should be co-opted, including Britain if it has by then joined the EEC.

Peres explained that he does not mean that Israel should join the committee as a full or associate member, but as a "department", in all that concerned the security of the Middle East which is of importance to NATO. Taviani replied that this proposal is indeed worthy of serious consideration, however the committee is not yet a member of NATO and it has no mandate to look after the security of any region in the world. He repeated that the committee's main object is political, namely, to promote the union of Europe. Nevertheless, he agrees that there is room for cooperation with Israel in military matters, but this should be negotiated with every member of the committee separately.

Arms purchase from Italy was also discussed. The minister said he thinks it is to the West's advantage to keep Israel strong, and he himself supports Israel's requests. He made light of the military might of the Arabs and he does not believe that they can be converted to the Western cause. Nasser's planned visit to Italy was also mentioned,[3] and the minister said that the initiative for that did not come from him but from the president, with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[4]

Notes

1. Taviani was not a member of the government set up in June 1958. In June 1959 he was named finance minister.
2. No documentation of this has been located.
3. On this matter, see the letters from Sasson to the M.F.A., dated 4 and 5 March 1958, in File 130.23/3091/15. In the end Nasser did not visit Italy in 1958-1959.
4. M. Gazit noted in the margin: "M. of F.A., 1. The report is addressed to you; 2. An important and interesting report." The minister of foreign affairs made do with initialing it.

324. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan (Jerusalem). 10 August 1958

Coded Tel. 636; Inc.: 130.09/2358/4

Mrs. Meir met Fanfani at her request, senior officials of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office also being present.[1] Mrs. Meir reviewed the situation in the Middle East, and Fanfani followed by explaining his plan for ensuring the stability of the region. This plan has three main points:

1) All the states of the Middle East, including Israel, will commit themselves to refraining from interfering in any manner in the internal affairs of their neighbours.

2) All the Powers, including the Soviet Union, will commit themselves to refraining from interfering and from encouraging interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the Middle East.

3) A fund will be established for the economic and social advancement of the Middle Eastern countries, for investment and development, and for solving the refugee issue.

Fanfani said he thinks the refugee issue is the main problem. In his opinion, this should be dealt with first and Israel should participate in its solution. When Mrs. Meir replied that Israel would be prepared to help as far as it could and would also be willing to pay compensation, Fanfani refrained from demanding that Israel absorb some of the refugees.

The talk then turned to the issue of Israel's borders. Fanfani said Italy will not take the initiative in this matter, and Mrs. Meir stated categorically that there is no question of Israel giving up any part of its territory. Fanfani said he wholly understands this position, and he hopes that the question will not arise because Italy has also had painful experience in the matter of its borders.

As regards Jordan, Mrs. Meir explained that Israel has no wish to expand its territory at the expense of its neighbours, but it cannot not view with equanimity the presence of the U.A.R. or Iraq on its borders.

Concerning Jerusalem, Mrs. Meir said Israel would welcome the establishment of an international authority in the Old City.

Notes

1. The meeting took place at request of Foreign Minister Meir, at the height of the crisis in the Middle East (see chapter 1). At the time Fanfani was both prime minister and foreign minister. (See Eytan to Sasson, telegram 979, 28 July 1958, 130.09/2358/2.)
2. Adolfo Alessandrini, the secretary-general (director-general) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

325. E. Sasson (Rome) to the West European Division. 19 September 1958

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2358/4

Sasson has had a friendly meeting with Fanfani. He briefed Fanfani on his talks in Israel[1] and said he was happy to transmit to him Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's invitation to pay a visit to Israel. This invitation does not come in the wake of the reports of Nasser's invitation to Fanfani to visit Egypt,[3] but is an expression of appreciation of his efforts in promoting peace in the Middle East and in the entire world. Fanfani thanked Sasson for the invitation and said it would be preferable for the visit to take place at least a few weeks after his visit to Egypt in order not to create the impression that he was on a mission of mediation. Fanfani concluded by requesting that Israel take part in the Mediterranean congress in Florence to be headed by La Pira[5] and promising that he will see to it that there will be no attacks on Israel on the part of the Arab representatives there.

Notes

1. Sasson was summoned home for consultations in the second half of August (see foreign minister's bureau to Sasson, 23 August 1958, 130.09/2358/2.)
2. See No. 324.
3. Fanfani visited Egypt in January 1959; see No. 326.
4. Randolfo Pacciardi, leader of the Italian Republican Party, conducted a study tour of the Middle East in September and October 1958.
5. The mayor of Florence, Giorgio La Pira, initiated a Mediterranean conference headed by the crown prince of Morocco, Moulay Hassan (later King Hassan II), which was scheduled for October 1958. Non-governmental representatives of Arab countries and Israel were invited to discuss questions of ethics and rapprochement between nations and religions. When it was discovered that the Israeli delegation included two Foreign Ministry officials, Maurice Fischer and Reuven Shiloah, the Arab participants threatened to boycott the conference. Through the intervention of the Italian foreign ministry a compromise was achieved, whereby Fischer and Shiloah were invited to sit, as guests, among the members of the diplomatic corps. (See Sasson to the M.F.A., telegram 763, 19 September 1958; Barkat to the M.F.A., 5 October 1958; both in 130.09/2358/4.)

326. E. Sasson (Rome) to the West European Division. 14 January 1959

Coded Tel. 124; Inc.: 130.09/2358/6

Fanfani has told Sasson[1] about his talk with Nasser. When he said that Israel's existence could no longer be ignored, Nasser replied that they were not ignoring Israel's existence but refused to recognize it and were forced to fight it, for four reasons:

1) Israel is a constant threat to the security and territorial integrity of the Arab states.
2) It is an instrument in the hands of Western imperialism.
3) It is supported by the power of international Jewry.
4) It is responsible for the creation of the refugee problem.

Fanfani rejected the first three arguments. As to the refugee issue, he admitted that this was a burning humanitarian problem that demanded an urgent solution. He told Nasser about his talk with Mrs. Meir[2] and said he had the impression that Israel was willing to contribute to the solution of the problem, but that they did not trust the Arabs states' intentions.

In another talk with Nasser, person to person, the latter said that if the West aided Egypt in the economic, financial and technological spheres, this could result in due course in their moderating their attitude towards Israel.

Fanfani left Nasser greatly encouraged and he believes that the solution of the refugee problem is the key to solving the entire Israeli-Arab conflict. He thinks the West should give this problem urgent priority.[3]

Notes

1. Sasson sent another telegram after his meeting with Fanfani, this time on matters not concerning Israel; see telegram 123, 14 January 1959, 130.09/2258/6.
2. See No. 324.
3. In an earlier letter to the M.F.A. (4 January 1959, 130.23/3091/9), Sasson wrote that Fanfani's plans with regard to the Middle East, North Africa, and relations among Western countries were frozen for the moment until the Italian domestic situation had been resolved. Fanfani resigned as prime minister on 26 January 1959.

327. Sh.B. Kapel [Jerusalem] to M. Gazit and the Latin America Division. 1 February 1959

Copy: 130.23/3117/12

Kapel reviews the development of relations between Israel and Spain, and cites a number of recent events that prove that there has been no progress in these relations. The gravest of all are the recent declarations by the Spanish foreign minister in Damascus and Madrid that Spain will never recognize Israel.[4] This deterioration in the Spanish attitude demands an appropriate and considered reaction. Question time in the Knesset is a good opportunity for this, and he suggests that the minister of foreign affairs' response be given full publicity in Israel and abroad.[5] He also thinks action should be taken in Latin America and the United States.

Notes

1. On this affair see Eytan to Sharett, 24 April 1949, 130.02/2391/28.
2. This is not accurate. The resolution called for the recall of the heads of the diplomatic missions (ambassadors and ministers), but diplomatic relations continued at the level of chargés d'affaires.
3. See n. 2 above. In November 1950 United Nations General Assembly decided to cancel the restrictions on diplomatic relations with Spain.
4. For a summary of the statements by the Spanish foreign minister, as published in the newspaper *La Guardia Española* on 24 January 1959, see in File 130.23/3117/17.
5. On 10 February 1959, Golda Meir replied to a parliamentary interpelation submitted by MK Nurock on relations between Israel and Spain. She said in part that she saw no reason why normal relations should not be established between the two countries. As for the statements by the Spanish foreign minister, she said that she hoped that they had been reported inexactly; it was her hope that the two peoples would a find a way to establish normal diplomatic relations. (See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Fourth Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXVI, 10 February 1959, pp. 1050-1051.)

328. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan (Jerusalem). 4 March 1959

Coded Tel. 227; Inc.: 130.09/2358/6

Sasson was invited to meet Pella, the new Italian minister of foreign affairs.[1] The following subjects were discussed:

Arms purchase: Pella promised to remove obstacles and revert to the situation as it was before Fanfani's regime.

Immigration from Romania:[2] Sasson thanked Pella for the aid given to those immigrants who pass through Italy on their way to Israel and requested that the subject be given a low profile in the press in order not to irritate the Romanians.

The Agricultural Conference in Jerusalem—Pella promised to recommend to the minister of agriculture that he join the Italian delegation.[3]

Pella thanked Sasson for the invitation to visit Israel and promised to do so at the first convenient opportunity.[4]

Notes

1. Pella returned to the Foreign Ministry in February 1959.
2. See Chapter 18.
3. An international agricultural conference, with about 300 representatives from 38 countries, was held in Jerusalem in April 1959. Only Belgium was represented by its minister of agriculture.
4. Pella did not visit Israel while he was in office.

329. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 March 1959

Coded Tel. 568; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

Mrs. Meir has had a talk with Italian Foreign Minister Pella.[1] With regard to the Berlin crisis,[3] Pella thinks that it will not become acute if the West takes a firm stand.

Turning to the Middle East, Pella said he agreed with Israel's assessment of Nasser and his intentions. As to Qassim, he had been informed by a British source that Qassim did not wish to be totally under the Soviets' thumb.

Mrs. Meir then raised the question of Israel's joining NATO, in the spirit of her talk with Debré.[4] Pella said that "Israel's role as a sentry for the West is greatly appreciated", and that everyone knows they can depend on its fortitude. Pella mentioned the possibility of reviving the Baghdad Pact in another form. Mrs. Meir said she has doubts about that, and thinks any bond between Iraq and the West is highly improbable. Pella said the question of Israel's joining NATO would be raised in his talks with Debré, and he promised to keep Sasson informed on this matter.[5] In conclusion, Mrs. Meir repeated her invitation to Pella to visit Israel.

Notes

1. The meeting, part of Israel's efforts to forge ties with NATO, was held in Paris; see Chapter 14.
2. Carlo Alberto Straneo, director of the political department of the Italian Foreign Ministry.
3. In March and April 1959 a number of incidents took place in the air corridors between West Germany and Berlin, when Soviet planes buzzed American aircraft flying above 10,000 feet. The Soviets claimed that such flights could not be allowed, a charge rejected by the United States.
4. The reference is to ties between Israel and NATO. On the meeting with Debré, see No. 374.
5. Pella did not meet with Sasson; instead Straneo, who had been present at the meeting between Meir and Pella, did. He asked whether Israel had had discussions with the other NATO countries and with the secretary-general of the organization. He added that Pella wanted to appear in NATO as supporting the idea of ties with Israel and not as the initiator. (See Sasson to the M.F.A., telegram 347, 11 April 1959, 130.09/2358/6.)

330. J. Prato (Athens) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 24 March 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3104/16

Prato has had a meeting with the Greek minister of foreign affairs, Averoff-Tossizza. He opened by congratulating the Greek government on the agreement about Cyprus, which is very important because it removes a danger to peace in Israel's neighbourhood. It also serves as a precedent because it was reached through direct negotiations between the parties in accordance with the principle adopted by Israel. It could therefore serve as a model to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The solution of the Cyprus conflict also removes an obstacle to Greece's recognition of Israel.

The minister thanked Prato, and then said that Greece is very unhappy about the present state of affairs, which could be termed "ugly". The solution of the Cyprus issue did indeed remove an obstacle, but others still remain, in particular the question of the Greek minority in Egypt. Prato replied that the situation of the various minorities in Egypt, including the Greek one, is entirely independent of Greece's relations with Egypt but is connected with Egypt's selfish interests. A weak stand on the part of the Greek government would only make it more difficult for it to protect its nationals in Egypt. The proof is that Israel's good relations with Italy, France and Britain has not dissuaded Nasser from restoring the rights of their nationals in Egypt.

Prato made two suggestions which he thought could improve relations: the Greek minister of agriculture should come to the agricultural conference,[2] and the air traffic agreement between the two countries should be ratified. Averoff-Tossizza reacted to these suggestions favourably and requested more details.

The talk then turned to Nasser, the character of his leadership, and the best policy for dealing with him. The minister agreed with Prato's analysis but not with his conclusions. He said he still believes that Nasser is not "lost" to the West and it would be worthwhile making the effort to bring him into the fold.

Prato's conclusion is that progress in the matter of Israel-Greece relations is still a long way off. Averoff-Tossizza, though wishing to do so, does not have the courage to take such a far-reaching step. The only person powerful enough to do so is the prime minister[4] himself, but it is not easy to reach him behind Averoff-Tossizza's back. Prato does have a plan, but the time has not yet come to give its details. In the meantime, the Greeks' feelings of guilt should be exploited to the full in getting things from them, and the information campaign should be intensified.

This unhealthy state of affairs affects relations between Israel and Cyprus. Prato fears that the Greeks will not help Israel to establish diplomatic relations with Cyprus because this would put them in a ridiculous position. That was why he did not raise the question of Cyprus in his talk with Averoff-Tossizza. Dealings should be directly with Cyprus; the way to Athens passes through Cyprus and not vice versa.

Notes

1. The telegram is in File 130.09/2293/6.
2. On the agricultural congress, see No. 328 and n. 3 there.
3. See No. 325 and n. 4 there.
4. Constantinos Karamanlis, prime minister of Greece.

331. M. Shneerson (Paris) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 18 June 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3117/12

Shneerson reports on two meetings that Perlzweig of the World Jewish Congress has had with Jose de los Arcos,[2] director of the Middle East department in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which deals with the relations between Israel and Spain. De los Arcos began by saying that Spain regarded Israel as a *fait accompli*, a state like all the other states, and the fact

that its inhabitants are of the Jewish faith has nothing to do with Spain's attitude to it. This attitude is determined by objective factors working in the Middle East and also by Spanish interests in Africa. Accordingly, he could not say that Spain would be prepared to establish diplomatic relations with Israel in the very near future; it would not, however, be fair to accuse him of hostility towards Israel. At the same time, there is a long history of misunderstandings between the two countries, the principal ones being Israel's voting against Spain in the United Nations[4] and its sympathizing with the Spanish republicans. Perlzweig was told that Spain attaches great importance to the contacts with him and will willingly maintain them. It was intimated to him that it would be a mistake for Israel to try and establish contact through an official envoy or Israeli representative. The time for that has not yet arrived.

Shneerson comments that, in his opinion, the reasons mentioned by de los Arcos for Spain's attitude are of secondary importance. There are much more important political factors, such as Franco's hopes of being a bridge between the Arabs and the West—based on Spain's historical and cultural ties with the Arab world, its non-intervention in the conflicts in the Middle East, its African past, and so on. As long as this fallacious theory is embraced, Spain will not change its attitude. One may add to the above the powerful influence the Church has in all aspects of Spanish life. At the same time, one must not dismiss de los Arcos's remarks on Israel's ties with the Spanish republicans. These could even harm those commercial and cultural ties that Israel could have with Spain in the absence of regular diplomatic relations.

Notes

1. The Spanish ambassador in Washington, José Maria Areilza y Martinez-Rodas.
2. José Luis de los Arcos, the director of the Middle East Department of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. This is an error. There were no votes about Spain at the United Nations General Assembly in 1952; but see n. 4.
4. In 1949, Israel voted in the United Nations General Assembly against a resolution calling for the abolition of restrictions on diplomatic relations with Spain (on the affair, see Vol. 5, No. 348). The resolution did not pass. In 1950 Israel again voted against a similar resolution, but this time it did pass. On the other hand, in December 1955 Israel voted in favour of admitting Spain as a member of the United Nations.
5. The reference is to Ovidio Gondi, a local employee of the Israel permanent mission at the U.N.
6. The reference is to a reception held on 6 February 1959 by the Israel-Ibero-American Institute in New York in honour of the permanent representative of Uruguay at the United Nations, Enrique Fabregat, to which a representative of Republican Spain was also invited.

332. Y. Tekoah (New York) to the Prime Minister. 25 September 1959

Copy: 130.23/3091/10

Tekoah reports on Mrs. Meir's talk with the Italian minister of foreign affairs, which took place on September 23rd, a few hours after the Minister's speech in the United Nations Assembly.[1] Mrs. Meir expressed her appreciation of the minister's support of freedom of navigation in his speech. Pella replied that the issue of freedom of navigation touches basic principles of justice and he thinks it his duty to emphasize his government's stand on this issue.

Mrs. Meir raised the problems of the Middle East, and said she wished to refute three assumptions prevalent in the Western world: (1) that the Middle East is all Arab, (2) that there is such a thing as Arab unity, (3) that Nasser is the leader of the Arab world. The events of this year have demonstrated that these assumptions are groundless. Pella agreed with this analysis.

Mrs. Meir then referred to Israel's request to form at least some sort of informal association with NATO, to include exchange of information and coordination. Pella replied that he thought this idea reasonable, but in his opinion such contacts should be made through military and not political channels. Mrs. Meir agreed.

Pella then brought up a new idea: the formation of a body, on which the Western Powers and the Soviet Union would sit, for the purpose of extending aid to the Middle East and perhaps also to Africa. Mrs. Meir said she thinks it an illusion that one can come to an agreement with the Soviet Union on this subject. Such an agreement would only shackle the West, while the Soviets would find ways to go around it. Pella said he agrees with this assessment.

Notes

1. Speaking to the UN General Assembly on 23 September 1959, the Italian foreign minister said that his country remained faithful to the principles of free navigation and had a special interest that they be applied in the Mediterranean basin. (See "At the General Assembly," No. 29, 13 October 1959, issued by the International Organizations Division of the M.F.A..)
2. The reference is evidently to a meeting held in Rome in August 1958, when Golda Meir visited there. Pella was not foreign minister at the time and no record of the meeting has been found; see also No. 324.
3. This plan was never realized.

333. A. Miron (Lisbon) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 28 October 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3119/38

Miron sums up the achievements of Israel's consulate-general in Portugal since its opening almost a year ago. Economic relations have progressed, and a trade agreement was signed at the beginning of the year, which removed commercial and shipping obstacles. Israel's exports to Portugal are steadily increasing. There are also successes in the field of information. There are close contacts with the press, radio, and television, and the attitude is mostly sympathetic to Israel.

On the other hand, there has been no progress in the political sphere. There are excellent personal relations and Miron is always welcome at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but he has been told, with the utmost courtesy, that there are no prospects of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In Miron's opinion, this is because the Portuguese received all they wanted with the opening of consular relations–trade, political relations, and cooperation between the missions at the United Nations. They will not gain from any change in the status of the Israeli representative, namely from raising the level from the consular to the diplomatic; on the contrary, it will add to their difficulties in the issues they are now facing, and they are very sensitive to any reaction in the United Nations.

In Miron's opinion, the ice can be broken only through a meeting at a high level, but he has not yet been able to set up such a meeting. In the meantime, he suggests the following: (1) reducing the quantity of imports from Portugal to Israel; (2) using outside influence, including talks between Israel's representatives abroad with their Portuguese opposite numbers; (3) cooperation in the United Nations; (4) organizing a pressure group in Portugal. If Fischer has other ideas, Miron would be glad to hear them, and he also requests Fischer's comments on the above.[2]

Notes

1. For a report on this visit, see the letter from Miron to the M.F.A., dated 21 July 1959, 130.23/3119/38.
2. For Fischer's response, see No. 334. In addition, Jacob Tsur forwarded Miron's letter to the minister of foreign affairs, who noted in its margin: "The affair should not be viewed tragically. He is doing fine work and it is impossible to force them." (See Tsur to Miron, 12 October 1959, 130.23/3119/38.)

334. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to A. Miron (Lisbon). 12 November 1959

Copy: 130.23/3119/30

Fischer replies to Miron's letter of 28 October.[1] Experience has shown that the more time elapses, the more difficult it is to establish relations with states that did not do so at the very beginning–for instance, Greece, the Vatican, and others. This means that vigorous efforts need to be made to regularize the situation with Portugal. Fischer suggests that Miron request a meeting with the secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and remind him of what he said to Fischer in Ankara about his wish to establish full diplomatic relations between the two countries.[2] He should also ask him whether he thought it would be useful for a senior official from his ministry to come to Israel to make arrangements for the establishment of such relations.

Notes

1. No. 333.
2. The secretary-general (director-general) of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, Luis Norton de Mattos, had served as ambassador in Ankara until March 1959 and was on friendly terms with Fischer, who was the Israel minister in Ankara until December 1956. He supported the establishment of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Israel. (See, for example, the letter from Alon to Fischer, 2 March 1959, 130.23/3119/38.)

335. A. Miron (Lisbon) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 24 November 1959

Copy: 130.09/3119/38

Miron had a meeting with the secretary-general of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The subject was Israel's support of Portugal's cause in the United Nations.[6] Miron is now waiting for the secretary-general's action, but he does not think any conclusions will be reached before the matter is discussed in the United Nations and the vote is taken. As to a visit by a senior Portuguese personality, the question of the expenses has not yet been settled. If the ministry agrees to finance the visit, he will transmit the formal invitation. There is also the possibility of taking advantage of a visit

by another personality. The ball is now in de Mattos's court and one has to wait for him to stand by his promises.

Notes

1. No. 334.
2. No. 333.
3. Not found.
4. In this telegram (in File 130.23/3119/38), Miron reports that after he had learned that Arab representatives at the United Nations were adopting a negative stance towards Portugal he had told the secretary-general of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry that if Portugal persevered in its present attitude toward Israel it was liable to find itself losing on all accounts. The secretary-general replied that they were disappointed by the Arab position and that he had spoken to his foreign minister in this context about relations with Israel.
5. In this letter (in File 130.23/3119/28), Miron reported that he had informed the secretary-general of Israel's decision as to how it would vote on matters of interest to Portugal at the General Assembly; see n. 6 below. De Mattos promised to bring the question of the establishment of relations to decision by his foreign minister at "the first opportunity" and to arrange for a meeting between Miron and the minister "as soon as possible".
6. Starting in 1957, the situation in non-self-governing territories was discussed by the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Portugal maintained that its colonies in Asia and Africa were part of the metropolitan country and accordingly did not belong in this framework. The committee decided to set up a subcommittee to come up with a definition of such territories and report back to the next session of the General Assembly. In this context, the question arose as to whether a simple majority or a two-thirds majority would be required to pass a resolution. Israel decided not to oppose the motion itself, which did not stipulate the fate of the Portuguese territories and gave it a chance to vote along with the countries of Asia and Africa. But it did demonstrate a willingness to vote in favour of requiring a two-thirds majority. In the actual vote such a majority was not achieved and the resolution was defeated.
7. Later the Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved covering all the expenses of the visit of the president of the National Assembly, but he delayed his response.
8. Conde Querida (a businessman close to the ruling circles, spelling uncertain) visited Israel in December 1959-January 1960. (See Miron to the M.F.A., telegram 46, 15 January 1960, 130.09/2322/6.)

336. E. Sasson (Rome) to the West European Division and the Middle East Division. 13 December 1959

Coded Tel. 6; Inc.: 130.09/2358/6

Sasson reports on his talk with Straneo, who told him about the visit to Italy of Mahmud Fawzi, the minister of foreign affairs of the U.A.R. The latter adopted a moderate stance in all the forums he appeared in, and presented Egypt as a peace-loving country. He mentioned Israel only twice, in marginal comments. In his talk with Pella he raised the issue of Israel's signing a multilateral agreement with the O.E.E.C. countries, and stated that such an agreement would adversely affect the relations between this organization and the Arab countries and the Afro-Asian bloc. Pella did not commit himself, but pointed out that the issue had nothing to do with the bilateral relations between Italy and the U.A.R. but was connected with the entire O.E.E.C., where it would, no doubt, be debated in depth in due course. During the talk Fawzi attempted to refute the reports about Egypt's plans for domination of all the other Arab countries in order to implement by force the unification of the Arab world. He pointed out that it was Syria that had proposed the union with Egypt. The assumption in Egypt was that similar approaches would be made in due course by other states, and it was therefore acting to invigorate its economy so that it would be able to shoulder the heavy burden to be laid on it for the sake of the unification of the Arab world.

Note

1. For the M.F.A.'s reply, see No. 400. In another telegram, Sasson related that Straneo had reported to him, personally and in confidence, that many emissaries from Egypt, both official and private, had been circulating in Italy recently, with a single goal: to work to frustrate economic ties between Italy and Israel. Other representatives of Arab countries were also active with the same objective. Straneo admitted that such pressure had an impact on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (See Sasson to the West European Division, 7, 13 December 1959, 130.09/2358/6.)

337. East European Division to the Israel Missions in Eastern Europe. 6 January 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 510; Outg.: 130.09/2377/7

1) The Division updates the missions regarding political policy in relation to Eastern Europe and developments there. Israel is endeavouring to adopt a moderate and flexible approach in its relations with the Eastern bloc and especially the U.S.S.R.. There is no intention to be obstructive in technical matters. Israel is flexible regarding the issue of reciprocity for matters such as the import of films, cultural relations and dealing with commercial conflicts. Reactions to attacks in the media are as moderate as possible. Representatives are requested to hold regular background discussions with their counterparts. An attempt is being made to handle current controversial issues with Bulgaria[1] and the U.S.S.R.[2] in a respectable and quiet manner. As regards Hungary,[3] steps are being initiated to improve relations.
2) Regarding the Soviet Note,[5] a reply is being prepared arguing that although Israel does not agree with the U.S.S.R.'s views on the causes of the international crisis, it is prepared to accept certain basic premises such as peaceful coexistence, avoidance of the use of force to settle conflicts or make territorial changes and desistance from hostile propaganda. As for bilateral relations, here too Israel would be pleased if the principles of free access and commercial and cultural ties were implemented and it will make efforts in this direction.

Notes

1. On 16 October 1957, Israel lodged a complaint with the International Court of Justice in The Hague against the Government of Bulgaria concerning the El Al plane that had been shot down over Bulgarian airspace in August 1955. On 26 May 1959 the court accepted the Bulgarian claim that it had no jurisdiction over the matter. The Bulgarian representatives informed the court, however, that their government was prepared to continue discussions in order to reach a compromise and Israel announced that it had decided to begin negotiations with the Bulgaria.
2. On 25 October 1957, two Israeli oil companies submitted claims to the arbitration board of the Soviet Ministry of Trade, alleging that they had suffered damages as a result of the unilateral abrogation of a fuel supply contract by the Soviet Union after the Sinai Campaign. Their claims were rejected on 19 June 1958; see also No. 352 (Editorial Note) and No. 353.
3. In late November 1957, the Israel minister in Budapest was asked to inform the Hungarian Foreign Ministry of Israel's desire to begin negotiations about emigration, in the context of the commercial agreement with Hungary, which

included credits in Israeli goods. (See Levavi to the Israel legation in Budapest, telegram 887, 25 November 1957, 130.09/2295/12.)

4. The reference is to a letter from Ben-Gurion to the prime minister of Romania, Chivu Stoica. The letter, which was delivered in December 1957, has not been found. (See Harel to Eytan, 19 December 1957, 130.23/3123/16.)
5. On 10 December 1957, the Soviet Union submitted to Israel (and other countries) a Note that enumerated the reasons for international tension and included principles intended to strengthen peace throughout the world and especially in the Middle East. On 21 January 1958, Foreign Minister Golda Meir handed Israel's reply to the Soviet ambassador in Israel; see No. 339. (The text of the Soviet Note is in File 130.02/2449/11.)

338. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 15 January 1958

Coded Tel. 15; Outg.: 130.09/2327/3

The ambassador is instructed to meet with the foreign minister or one of his deputies for an exchange of views. He is to report that the Israeli reply to the Soviet Note[2] is on its way to Moscow and also relate to reports in the press about Russian support of the idea of returning to the 1947 borders,[3] to the decision to appoint Bodrov as ambassador to Israel,[4] and to the proposal to exchange parliamentary delegations. He should also stress the fact that in view of some signs of an improved atmosphere, Israel is surprised by Soviet support of the resolution passed at the Cairo conference.[5] The resolution stating that the Gulf of Aqaba is an Arab sea, closed to international traffic is a serious contravention of international law and Israel finds difficulty in believing that it was passed unanimously in the presence of the Soviet delegation.[6]

Notes

1. Avidar, the Israel ambassador in Moscow, was not in the city because he was a member of the Israel delegation to the United Nations General Assembly and after that visited Israel.
2. See No. 337 and n. 5 there.
3. The reference is to newspaper reports in late 1957 and early 1958, including articles by Joseph Alsop of the *New York Times*, alleging that the Soviet Union intended to propose forcing Israel to return to the 1947 borders.
4. In 1953 Mikhail Bodrov was the Soviet ambassador in Sofia and played an important role in the renewal of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel.

5. The Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference was held in Cairo from 26 December 1957 through 1 January 1958 at a non-governmental level (nations rather than governments were represented). Its resolutions termed Israel "an imperialist base" and the Gulf of Eilat (Aqaba) "a closed Arab gulf located in the territorial waters of Arab countries". The Soviet Union was an observer at conference.
6. On Avidar's meeting in the wake of this telegram, see No. 340.

339. Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the U.S.S.R.. (Jerusalem, 19 January 1958)

Translation from the Hebrew version: 93.39/449/7

The Government of Israel has given serious consideration to the Note of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, No. 36, of 10 December 1957.[1] The Government of Israel is pleased to record its full agreement with the Government of the U.S.S.R. regarding most of the constructive principles contained in the Note, which are designed to strengthen peace in the world and in the Middle East in particular.

Israel, being a small country that is not connected by any political pact with any Power or Group of Powers in the world, abstains from expressing opinions regarding the causes and factors of international tension, though not necessarily because she agrees with all the points in the U.S.S.R. government's Note regarding this issue. At the same time, the Government of Israel wholeheartedly endorses the assumption of the Government of the U.S.S.R. that the Government of Israel, cognizant of Israel's responsibility as a member of the United Nations, will on its part do all in its power to assist in the prevention of a new war and in the strengthening of peace and friendly cooperation among the nations.

The Government of Israel views with anxiety the sharpening of international tension as well as the danger of the outbreak of a war liable to bring unparalleled disaster on the whole of humanity. Israel believes that peace is indivisible and that, therefore, peace must be maintained everywhere, for any "small" or "local" war is likely to spread into world-wide conflagration.

The Government of Israel wholeheartedly welcomes the opinion of the Government of the U.S.S.R. that "relations among the nations must be based on the mutual maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity, on the principle of non-aggression and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, on equality and mutual benefit–in sum, they must be based on the principles of co-existence in peace and cooperation".

When President's Eisenhower's Representative visited Israel on 2 May 1957,[2] the Government of Israel formally informed the Government of the United States of America that:

"Israel reaffirms that in the conduct of her international relations she is guided by the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter to strengthen universal peace, to develop friendly relations among nations, to settle international disputes by peaceful means, and to achieve international cooperation in the economic, social and humanitarian spheres.

"In conformity with her obligations under the Charter, Israel is opposed to aggression from any quarter against the territorial integrity and political independence of any country. Israel entertains no aggressive intent against any other people or nation anywhere, and is agreed on the importance of preserving the political independence and territorial integrity of the countries of the Middle East.

"Israel recognizes that every effort must be made to achieve lasting peace both in the Middle East and throughout the world and will cooperate with the United States and other friendly governments to this end."

The Government of Israel herewith expresses its desire for cooperation with the Government of the U.S.S.R. and with all other friendly governments for the purpose of achieving the above aims.

As a small nation dwelling on the Mediterranean as well as the Red Sea shore at the western end of the Middle East, and as a people which only ten years ago was privileged to renew its independence, with the assistance of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., and the great majority of the members of the United Nations at that time, Israel regards as her chief task the development of her small country for the benefit of all her inhabitants and the rooting of the Jewish immigrants, coming to the country from various parts of the world, in productive and creative endeavour. In order to achieve these purposes, Israel is the more in need of peace in her region and in the world.

Unfortunately, Israel was attacked, on the very day of her independence on 14 May 1948, by the neighbouring Arab States, and to this day these neighbours, in violation of the U.N. Charter, refuse to make peace with Israel. Moreover, they publicly declare that their aim is the annihilation of Israel by force. Despite the explicit resolutions of the U.N. Security Council in 1951 and in 1956 with regard to the freedom of passage in the Suez Canal—which, according to the Constantinople Convention, the U.N. Charter, and the General Armistice Agreement, must be open to the passage of Israel; vessels and to the vessels of all other nations—the Government of Egypt refuses to abide by these resolutions and, in violation of the U.N. Charter, proclaims that it is in a state of belligerency against Israel.

The Governments of Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, the Lebanon and Saudi Arabia not only refuse to make peace with Israel and to enter into trade and

economic relations with her, but, in contravention of the principles of the U.N., they have organized an economic boycott against Israel as well as against foreign firms maintaining economic relations with Israel.

In contravention of the U.N. Charter, and contrary to the peace-seeking principles contained in the Note of the Government of the U.S.S.R., these Governments refuse to enter into any negotiations with the Government of Israel for the establishment of peaceful relations and cooperation.

Israel demands nothing from the neighbouring countries except peaceful coexistence in the basis of the principles so forcefully put forward in the Note of the Government of the U.S.S.R., that is, the abstention from the disturbance of the status quo and from the imposition of territorial changes upon anybody.

It is Israel's desire to base its relations with the neighbouring Arab countries on the proposal put forward by the Government of the U.S.S.R at the Twelfth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, namely, on respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Israel and of her neighbours, on the abstention from attack and from interference in her internal affairs as well as theirs, and the maintenance of coexistence on the basis of amicable cooperation with the purpose of the fruitful development of the entire region as well as the strengthening of world peace.

The Government of Israel feels certain that the Government of the U.S.S.R. could greatly assist in the promotion of peace in the Middle East if it were to call upon all the nations in the region to maintain peaceful and co-operative coexistence and to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the nations of the Middle East, as expressed in the Soviet Government's Note to the Government of Israel, and if, towards this end, the Government of the U.S.S.R. were to advise Israel and the Arab States in the Middle East to enter into direct negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty of peace and the establishment of cooperation.

Finally, the Government of Israel wishes to declare its strong desire to establish closer economic and cultural relations between Israel and the Soviet Union and, with an improvement of the international climate in view, to improve relations between Israel and the U.S.S.R. The Government of Israel is convinced that such an improvement in relations would strengthen peace in the Middle East and would perhaps contribute in a modest measure to the reduction of world tension.

Notes

1. See No. 337 and n. 5 there. The present Note was handed to the Soviet ambassador in Israel on 21 January.
2. After the Sinai Campaign and Israel's agreement to withdraw, the U.S. Congress

approved, on 7 March 1957, and the president on 9 March, what was known as the Eisenhower Doctrine. Its operative sections authorized the president to use armed force to assist any country in the Middle East that requested military assistance against armed aggression by any state controlled by international Communism, so long as this was compatible with United States treaty obligations and the constitution. On 2 May, the president's special envoy, James Richards, sent to explain the doctrine to the countries of the Middle East, arrived in Israel. After the visit, Israel and United States published an exchange of notes on 22 May. The text of these communiqués is in File 130.23/3088/3.

340. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 20 January 1958

Coded Tel. 538; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

Avidar reports on his meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Semyonov.[1] The hour-long meeting was mainly an ideological polemic between the two. Semyonov accused Israel of belonging to the forces of the past, of being a tool of colonialism, and of joining the Eisenhower Doctrine. He said that had the Soviet Union known in 1948 which way Israel would turn, it would not have supported it. Adopting an apologetic tone, Avidar pointed to the tragic misunderstanding between the two peoples. Avidar concluded the meeting by stating that he did not see any practical purpose in the discussion, except as a general clarification of matters.

Notes

1. V. S. Semyonov, a Soviet deputy foreign minister.
2. See No. 339.
3. No information has been found about the article in *Mezhdunarodnoe Zhizn*. In an article in *Sovremeni Vostok*, under the headline "Behind the Zionist Curtain," the author, A. Leonidov, asked how it could be that a country as small as Israel was one of the most dangerous centres of aggression in the Middle East. The article presents many details about the Israeli economy, including figures about exports and imports, industry, and the grants and loans from United States, while noting its subservience to American capitalism. (See Israel embassy in Moscow to the East European Division, telegram 502, 1 January 1958, 130.09/2327/4.)
4. See No. 338 and n. 5 there.
5. See ibid., n. 4.
6. See ibid., n. 3.
7. No report about the meeting between Gromyko and Meir has been found. Eytan wrote to Herzog (18 October 1957, in File 130.23/38/3), that "Gromyko said nothing that was not known from articles in *Pravda*, Radio Moscow, and Abramov's

remarks. Gromyko said nothing new and did not go beyond the line we knew even before this conversation with him."

8. Evidently an allusion to an article in *Pravda* of 18 January 1958, headlined "The Bandung Spirit in Action." The article praised the achievements of the Cairo conference and said that its resolutions, including those regarding Palestine and Algeria, were the outgrowth of the resolutions of the Bandung Conference, in light of the contemporary international situation, and started out from the perspective of the security interests and national independence of the countries of Asia and Africa. (See Chelouche to the East European Division, telegram 514, 8 January 1958 130.09/2327/4.)

   At Bandung, Indonesia, the first conference of the independent countries in Africa and Asia convened in April 1955. Due to Arab pressure Israel was not invited. In its resolutions the conference expressed support for "Arab rights in Palestine".
9. On 9 July 1957, serious incidents took place along the Israel-Syria border. The Syrians fired on Kibbutz Gonen and Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan; Israeli tanks returned fire.
10. See No. 339 and n. 2 there.
11. The reference is to a book by the brothers Merry and Serge Bromberger, published shortly after the Sinai Campaign, which contained "revelations" about the collusion between France and Israel during the campaign. See Merry and Serge Bromberger, *Les Secrets de l'Expédition d'Egypte*.
12. See also Nos. 341 and 342.

341. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 21 January 1958

Coded Tel. 540; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

Avidar states that the advantage of his discussion with Semyonov[1] was its complete frankness, greater than that in his meeting with Gromyko.[2] The essence of Semyonov's message is that Israel has to choose with which of the two super powers it would cast its lot, and—unlike the nations of Asia and Africa—does not have the option of maintaining normal relations with both blocs. The Russians take no interest in the social or economic structure of Israel, nor do they care that Israel considers itself to be the outcome of a national liberation movement. For the U.S.S.R. the essential point is Israel's international orientation and according to this standard it is one of the U.S.S.R.'s avowed opponents. The conclusion to be drawn from this conversation is that the Soviet Union is continuing its threat against the existence of the State of Israel, clearly stating that it regrets the aid it provided at the time of the establishment of the state. Avidar believes that Semyonov's observations are the most severe made to Israel so far by any Soviet statesman in an official and authoritative manner.

Notes

1. See No. 340.
2. See ibid., n. 7.

342. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to Y. Avidar. 30 January 1958

Copy: 130.23/3115/9

Levavi notes that Avidar's meeting with Semyonov[1] was of great concern to the members of the government and senior personnel in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 29 January a thorough review of the matter was held chaired by the foreign minister. What follows are a number of the ideas put forward and unanimously accepted by the participants.

Basic assumptions:

It can be assumed in the first place that the Soviet Union will categorically oppose Israeli policy that deviates from the Soviet line. Therefore, no real benefit will be derived from conducting fundamental clarifications with the Russians and apologetic justifications or explanations will be to no avail. Even so, efforts must be continued to reduce the tension in relations with the U.S.S.R. because Israel has not yet received tangible security guarantees from the West. Thus it is worthwhile endeavouring to reduce a possible tendency on the part of the Russians to encourage the Syrians and/or Egyptians to mount provocations along Israel's borders. Attempts should also be made to counter the possibility of the Russians adopting an even more severe policy toward Israel. There are still certain successes and prospects in the area of emigration to Israel and trade, and it is essential that these not be endangered.

Lines of action:

There is very little that can be done vis-à-vis the Soviets. What little there is requires refraining from provocation, restraint and attempts at premeditated distraction. Letters of rebuttal and explanation should continue to be sent to the to Soviet press; these must be phrased in a factual manner, without deprecation. Further meetings should be held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Semyonov and others, on general issues, on events in the international arena, and on concrete matters of a positive nature. The first discussion, preferably with Semyonov, should concern the recent exchange of Notes.

Note

1. Nos. 340 and 341.

343. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 February 1958

Coded Tel. 594; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

Avidar reports on his meeting with Zaitsev held at Avidar's request. It was conducted in a pleasant atmosphere. He referred to the Israeli reply to the Soviet Note.[1] Zaitsev replied that he considered the main points in the Israeli reply as being positive referring especially to the stand taken by Israel regarding the necessity to end the Cold War and the objections to establishing atomic missile bases on Israeli territory. He stressed the Soviet Union's desire to see a reduction of tension and the maintenance of peace in the Middle East because of that area's proximity to its own borders, and not due to tactical or strategic interests in the area. He mentioned the efforts made by the Soviet Union to reduce tension and prevent war, and also referred to the Rapacki plan[3] and the feasibility of such a scheme in for the Middle East. He closed with the hope that a summit meeting would be convened and be successful, and that it would also affect the situation in the Middle East. The meeting ended with the expression of hope for a better future.

Notes

1. No. 339.
2. See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Third Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXIII, pp. 1013.
3. Named for the Polish Foreign Minister, Adam Rapacki, who in 1957 advanced a plan for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in central Europe.

344. N. S. Khrushchev [Moscow] to the Prime Minister. 4 April 1958

Hebrew official translation: 130.23/3115/1

The premier of the Soviet Union informs Israel that the Soviet Union has decided to cease all nuclear experiments unilaterally from 31 March 1958.

He expressed the hope that this would improve the international political atmosphere in general, and would facilitate the creation of suitable conditions for the solution of other international issues that have not yet been resolved.[1]

Note

1. For Ben-Gurion's reply, see No. 346.

345. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 21 April 1958

Coded Tel. 695; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

At a reception given by the Polish ambassador to mark the anniversary of the treaty of friendship between Poland and the Soviet Union, Khrushchev caught sight of the Israeli ambassador and suddenly stated that the Russians hold no negative attitude toward the Jews. As evidence of this he noted that Chairman Voroshilov's wife is Jewish and many of the members of the Politburo also have Jewish wives; his grandson, too, is half-Jewish. When he had finished speaking, the ambassador went over to him and began talking about Israel-U.S.S.R. relations. Khrushchev once again tried to steer the conversation in the direction of the Jewish issue, but the ambassador said that this subject warranted a special meeting, and that he wished to discuss relations between the two countries. Khrushchev replied that it would be possible to hold such a meeting. They then returned to the matter of bilateral relations. Khrushchev, and Gromyko, who was standing beside him, raised the old issues: the bombing of the legation in Tel Aviv, the Sinai Campaign, and attacks in the Israeli press. In Avidar's opinion the reason Khrushchev raised the Jewish issue was to attempt to redress somewhat the negative impression created by his interview with *Le Figaro*.[2] As he was leaving, Khrushchev told him to contact them to arrange a further meeting.[3]

Notes

1. The reference is to the Elisabeth, the Queen Mother of Belgium, who visited Israel in March-April 1959.
2. The reference is to an interview with Khrushchev published in *Le Figaro* on 9 April 1958. Khrushchev maintained that the Jewish colony in Birobidzhan had failed

because of the Jews' inability to organize and live together. He also accused them of running after diplomas. (See Tsur to the M.F.A., telegram 338, 10 April 1958, 130.09/2348/3.)

3. See No. 347.

346. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union. 22 April 1958

Official Hebrew translation: 130.09/2327/3

In his reply to Khrushchev Ben-Gurion writes that the Government of Israel has given serious consideration to his note[1] and agrees with his comments regarding the threat to humanity posed by the arms race and the potential dangers of atomic weapons. In the opinion of the government, not only should experiments with atomic weapons cease but existing weapons should be destroyed and a non-production agreement be attained. The State of Israel, which was created in the aftermath of World War II, needs peace in the region and in the world at large to enable it to devote all its efforts to constructive enterprises. Israel will therefore support any steps taken to towards disarmament and to bring about the abatement of tensions. The State of Israel will do everything in its power to eliminate the nightmare of atomic weaponry and to establish a regime of world peace that would be guaranteed by the principle adopted by the United Nations: international disputes are not to be settled by force but by peaceful means.

Note

1. No. 344.

347. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 25 April 1958

Coded Tel. 127; Outg.: 130.09/2327/3

The division reacts to Avidar's telegram reporting his conversation with Khrushchev.[1] It suggests that he use the occasion of presenting the prime minister's Note[2] as a basis for the continuation of the discussion with Khrushchev. He will find the directives regarding Israel–U.S.S.R. relations

in telegram no.122.[3] Regarding attacks in the press, he should propose their mutual cessation, (of course to the extent that the Israeli government has control over the Israeli press). A counter campaign should be mounted regarding the Jewish issue, stressing that in view of the claims against the Jewish people, such as those expressed in the *Figaro* interview,[4] Israel has adopted the Zionist solution, which enabled the creation of a national entity without any limitation upon its national existence. Thus even if his allegations are valid, they in no way negate the right of immigration of those who wish to live in the Jewish state.

The Jewish issue should be raised only if Avidar senses that Khrushchev is open to discussion of this question.

Notes

1. No. 345
2. No. 346
3. This telegram contained background material for Avidar's meeting with Khrushchev, should it take place. He was told, inter alia, that the Arab-Israel dispute promoted intervention by the powers in the region. A solution to the problem and tranquility in the region would undercut the basis for such intervention and reduce the danger to peace. The solution of the problem was through direct and unconditional negotiations, a method that the Soviet Union supported throughout the world. (See East European Division to the Israel embassy in Moscow, telegram 122, 22 April 1958, 130.09/2327/3.) The meeting with Khrushchev never took place.
4. See No. 345, n. 2.

348. Y. Shimoni (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 June 1958

Coded Tel. 769; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

Shimoni has met with Abramov, who, among his other functions, is head of the Israeli Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] The renewal of commercial and cultural ties[2] was raised as well as the biased reporting on Israel in the press.

The conversation was polite but very reserved. Abramov raised the problem of Russian property[3] and, after some argument, ended by threatening that a way would be found to obtain what was rightfully theirs. He also threatened that their press would not remain silent in the face of the antagonism and falsifications appearing in the Israeli press. He stated that

commercial relations depend on commercial expedience, even though political considerations influence them. The Soviet enthusiasm for cultural ties has declined after Israel refused to receive a certain cultural delegation in 1954,[4] but he does not preclude the possibility of the renewal of such relations in the future. A further report will be made by the ambassador.[5]

Notes

1. Yaacov Shimoni, director of the East European Division in the M.F.A. was at the time on a working visit to Moscow.
2. See No. 352 (editorial note).
3. See No. 361 (Editorial Note) and No. 362.
4. In 1954, a Soviet delegation was invited to the conference of the Israel-Soviet Friendship League. This was done without coordination with the M.F.A. and the Israel embassy in Moscow. The M.F.A. did not see this as a contribution to cultural relations and refused to issue visas to the members of the delegation. (See East European Division to the Minister of Foreign Affairs's Bureau, 4 June 1958, 130.23/3115/9.) For a survey of cultural relations between the Soviet Union and Israel in 1956-1958, see the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Moscow, telegram 176, 7 June 1958, 130.09/2327/3.
5. The report, dated 10 June 1958, is in File 130.23/3115/9.

349. Editorial Note

Nasser's Visit to the Soviet Union

The President of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abd-ul-Nasser, paid an official visit to the Soviet Union from 29 April to 14 May 1958. The joint communiqué published at the end of the visit included a passage that very much concerned Israel:

"The two governments considered the question of the rights of Palestine Arabs and of their expatriation. In addition, they considered the question of the violation of human rights arising from this and the danger to peace and security in the area. The two governments reaffirm their full support of the lawful rights of the Palestine Arabs." (See the Israel embassy in Moscow to the M.F.A., telegram 746, 18 May 1958, in File 130.09/27/4.)

The Israel ambassador in Moscow noted that this was the first time that an official Soviet document:

1) Had referred to Palestinian refugees as expelled from their homeland;

2) Had said that a violation of human rights and a threat to the peace and security of the region were the result of this expulsion;

3) Had said that the governments of the Soviet Union and the U.A.R. affirmed their full support for the legal rights of Palestine Arabs. The implication was that the legal rights and affirmation of support for them stemmed from the definition of the refugees as having been expelled, and consequently that the expulsion was a factor threatening the peace and security of the region (see Avidar to the M.F.A., telegram 743, 16 May 1958, ibid.)

Israel was further concerned that in addition to what was stated the joint communiqué, Nasser had received secret anti-Israel promises, such as support for the reduction of its territory by a return to the 1947 borders. Accordingly the Israel ambassador in Moscow was instructed to seek clarification from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see No. 350).

350. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 2 June 1958

Coded Tel. 167; Outg.: 130.09/2327/3

In a cable, Levavi states his conviction that it is essential to clarify with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the significance of their talks with Nasser.[1] They should be asked about the disparity between the general principles on which the Nasser-Khrushchev declaration was based and Nasser's policy towards Israel since he came to power.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 349 (Editorial Note).
2. Not found.
3. Avidar and Shimoni replied that it would be better to leave the request for clarification of the meaning of the talks with Nasser to the interview that the ambassador planned to request with Khrushchev, because there was no chance of obtaining it at the ministry of foreign affairs level. (See their telegram to the M.F.A., telegram 774, 5 June 1958, 130.09/2327/4.) For the foreign minister's reply to this position, see No. 351.

351. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 13 June 1958

Coded Tel. 178; Outg.: 130.09/2327/3

Levavi instructs Avidar to take up the Nasser-Khrushchev joint declaration with the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, even though little can be expected from reactions of its officials or from Soviet personalities in general.[1,2] He is forwarding points for discussion at the Foreign Ministry, and with Khrushchev, if such a meeting comes about. These points include: the disparity between the declaration concerning maintenance of territorial integrity and the solution of conflicts by peaceful means, and Egyptian actions since 1948; Israel's many proposals for a peaceful solution and the continued Egyptian refusal to consider them; and the Arabs' refusal to find a constructive solution to the refugee problem. In the discussions, reference should be made to the Egyptian propaganda concerning commitments of support that Nasser had obtained in Moscow, including for demands that border changes be made according to the Bernadotte plan.[3] The hope should be expressed that such commitments have not been given.

Notes

1. No. 350.
2. Ibid., n. 3.
3. The Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte, appointed as the United Nations mediator in Palestine in 1948, proposed, in a plan he submitted to the United Nations secretary-general on 16 September 1948, to modify the partition lines and place Jerusalem under United Nations supervision; see Vol. I, p. 621 (Editorial Note).
4. See No. 347 and n. 3 there.
5. No. 347.
6. The reference is to a press report on 8 June 1958 about a meeting between Khrushchev and a delegation of professors from the United States who visited the Soviet Union in the summer of 1957. A report appeared only ten months later. The discussion turned on the status of the Jews and the possibility of their emigration to Israel. Khrushchev also referred to Israel's borders and said that Israel had expanded its territory beyond that allotted it by the U.N. partition resolution. (See telegrams from Levavi to Herzog, W935 and W937, 10 June 1958, 130.09/2312/5; Herzog to Levavi, telegram WNT428, 11 June 1958, 130.09/2314/7; and the report in *Ha'aretz*, 9 June 1958.)
7. In the wake of this telegram, Avidar met with Zaitsev, who said that he had nothing to add to the text of the joint Soviet-U.A.R. communiqué. At the end of the meeting he said that "if Israel conducted a peaceful policy toward its neighbours, it would have nothing to be afraid of". Avidar asked whether he could understand from this

that no promises had been made to Nasser and that only the text of the communiqué was relevant. Zaitsev replied that Avidar was free to understand as he wished. (See Avidar to the M.F.A., telegram 791, 19 June 1958, 130.09/2314/7.) In another telegram (801, 24 June 1958, ibid.), Avidar wrote the he was inclined to think that no clear promises had been made to Nasser concerning support for the Bernadotte plan or the 1947 partition lines. On the other hand, it was not impossible that the Soviets had expressed general sympathy for Arab claims against Israel, without committing themselves to a plan of action. The State Department in Washington had a similar assessment (see Israel embassy in Washington to the M.F.A., telegram W792, 29 May 1958, 130.09/2312/7).

352. Editorial Note

Trade Relations between the Soviet Union and Israel

Trade relations existed between the Soviet Union and Israel for three years, from December 1953 until November 1956.

The Soviet Union undertook to provide Israel with heavy fuel oil and petroleum, while Israel engaged to send citrus fruit and bananas to the Soviet Union. The accords for the import of heavy fuel oil and petroleum to Israel were signed on 6 December 1953; those for the export of citrus and bananas to the Soviet Union in early January 1954. These agreements were unilaterally abrogated by the Soviet Union in November 1956, in the wake of the Sinai Campaign. Consequently, Israeli companies that had been importing oil filed a claim for damages, in the amount of approximately $2.4 million. In accordance with the agreements, the claims were submitted to the Soviet Foreign Trade Arbitration Board, with offices in Moscow. The claim was heard by this board, sitting in a panel of three Soviet judges, in 13 sessions, between 4 December 1957 and 19 June 1958. (See Yosef Govrin, *Israel-Soviet Relations, 1953–1967*, [Hebrew] pp. 110–118.)

353. Israel Legal Delegation to Moscow to the Economic Division and I. Koslov. 19 June 1958

Coded Tel. 793; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

The delegation reports that the arbitrators have ruled against Israel.[1] The verdict is final and the detailed reasoned arguments will be given within 15

days.[2] This is a sad conclusion to litigation with the Soviets despite the efforts invested in it.

Notes

1. On the suspension of fuel supplies from the Soviet Union to Israel, see the preceding Editorial Note.
2. See the Israel Embassy in Moscow to the M.F.A. telegram 9, 18 July 1958, 130.09/2327/4.

354. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. [18] July 1958

Coded Circular Tel. 72; Outg.: 130.09/2378/8

The Division reports on Ben-Gurion's meeting with Soviet Ambassador Bodrov. Ben-Gurion expressed his desire for improved relations with the Soviet Union in three areas: improved relations with the Government of the Soviet Union, arms supplies, and a call by the Soviet government to Egypt and Israel to make peace. Bodrov gave the routine reply: that the matter does not depend only on the Soviet Union, which has a well known and clearly defined policy whose major provisions are efforts to attain peace and the struggle against colonialism. He is unable to advise the prime minister and will pass the matter on to higher authorities. During the course of the conversation, the counsellor who accompanied Bodrov raised a number of questions regarding Israel's policy, including rumours about the supply of arms from Germany and planes from France. He also asked about Israel's stand on the recent events in the area.[1] Ben-Gurion replied that the transaction with Germany has not been concluded; Israel is indeed receiving planes from France, but the Russian planes are better and Israel wishes to purchase them as well. He stressed that Israel does not have any agreements with or commitments to any Western country. Most important for Israel are its ties with the Jewish people in their two largest centres of concentration. It is unfortunate that there are no contacts with Soviet Jewry, and he hopes that the day will come when they will be able to immigrate to Israel. If he were able to meet with Khrushchev he would explain to him that the Soviet Union would not be endangered by such immigration. He wishes that the United States of America and the Soviet Union would jointly guarantee the continued existence and the borders of the State of Israel.

Notes

1. On the coup in Iraq and the unrest in Jordan and Lebanon in its aftermath, see chapter 1.
2. A paragraph meant specifically for Washington, with instructions for explaining the meeting with the Bodrov, has been omitted.

355. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 5 September 1958

Coded Tel. 923; Inc.: 130.09/2327/4

Avidar met with Zorin who handed him the reply to the Israeli Note of 12 August.[1] The letter states that Israel's reply in its Note of 12 August is tantamount to acknowledgement of its involvement in the Anglo-American aggression against the Arab countries. The explanations contained in the Note to the effect that foreign intervention came at the request of Jordan and Lebanon, were refuted in the deliberations of the emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly, where a resolution was passed unanimously for the immediate evacuation of foreign forces from Jordan and Lebanon.[2] The attempts by the Government of Israel to justify its participation in the aggression on the grounds that the United Nations has shown signs of weakness in guaranteeing the principles of its Charter have also proved invalid since the very act of intervention constitutes a violation of U.N. principles. Israel's declaration of its desire for peace with the Arab countries is not in keeping with its actions. If it really desired peace with its neighbours it would not have participated in the Anglo-American aggression and would not have granted permission to use its air space against these countries, nor would its senior statesmen have threatened to conquer Jordan's West Bank. The Soviet Note concludes with the statement that the Government of Israel is to a large extent responsible for the tense situation in the Middle East.

Avidar replied that he would pass on the content of the Note to the Israeli government. He made a few comments on the content on the basis of Israel's communication of 12 August. He refuted especially the accusation that Israeli statesmen had expressed threats regarding the West Bank and recalled Eban's reply to Gromyko on that issue during the debate at the United Nations.[3] Zorin replied that Eban's answer had been vague and equivocal. Avidar also mentioned the Arab's rejection of Israel's proposals

to sign a non-aggression pact and to begin peace negotiations. He concluded by saying that he would transmit this communication to his government.[5]

Zorin then read a "note verbale" containing complaints about inappropriate behaviour by Israeli diplomats in synagogues, where they have supposedly distributed Jewish Agency propaganda and other materials. These complaints have been received from Soviet citizens protesting that this behaviour offends their religious feelings. He wishes to stress that this behaviour is not in keeping with the accepted behaviour of diplomatic representatives and could lead to undesirable consequences.

Avidar replied that he is surprised at this accusation and absolutely refutes it. Members of the embassy, including himself, attend synagogues from time to time to pray and he has seen nothing of this nature. It is true that at times conversations are held with worshippers following the service, but these are mainly exchanges of greeting for the Sabbath and Festivals. Zorin reiterated his claims and requested that the ambassador instruct his staff to cease such behaviour.[6]

Notes

1. For this exchange of notes, see chapter 1, Nos. 38 and 54.
2. See No. 55 (Editorial Note).
3. In his speech to the emergency session of the United Nations on 20 August 1958, Gromyko asserted that rumors were circulating to the effect that Great Britain could not withdraw its forces from Jordan because of the threat of an Israeli attack on Jordan. Eban replied that same day that Israeli policy was based on mutual respect of the territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the Middle East. (See *GAOR, Third Emergency Special Session, 743rd and 744th Plenary Meetings*, 20 August 1958, pp. 137 and 146.)
4. See No. 354.
5. Israel did not reply to this Note.
6. Avidar did not have time to return to the issue before the end of his tenure in Moscow. It was raised again in a meeting with his successor, Arieh Harel; see No. 357.

356. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 17 October 1958

Coded Tel. 963; Inc.: 130.09/2378/4

Avidar held a farewell conversation with Gromyko that dealt with Israel–U.S.S.R. relations. In the course of the conversation, conducted in a most

courteous atmosphere, all the issues discussed recently were reviewed, especially the Soviet's claims about Israel's biased orientation and attacks against the U.S.S.R. in the Israeli press. Avidar's replies were also routine. Gromyko ended the conversation with the statement that everything depended on Israel and if it changed its policy this could bring about a change in the attitude of the U.S.S.R. They parted with mutual best wishes and the hope for a change in the future.

Notes

1. See No. 55 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 355 and n. 3 there.

357. A. Harel (Moscow) to the East European Division. 31 March 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3115/7

Harel sums up his first months in Moscow. Time has flown as if in a dream. He has met with numerous public personalities and government officials. The meetings have generally been courteous and most people have shown a keen interest in Israel, or at least professed to do so. Yet, despite the courtesy there are no signs of a change in their basic attitude and in all the meetings he has received negative responses to his attempts to improve cultural or commercial relations. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the government has given serious consideration to the issue of emigration to Israel and that domestic pressure was being applied in this area. At any rate, it would appear that the government is aware of the existence of a Jewish problem, at least to the extent that it permits a certain amount of Jewish cultural activity. He believes that this permission is granted with the purpose of proving to the world that Soviet Jews enjoy full cultural freedom and that their cultural life is both active and rich. It also derives from their desire to channel the unrest and national awakening among the Jews towards moderate Jewish activities within the U.S.S.R. and thus to prevent yearning for Israel and Zionist activity. Harel expresses his belief that this is not the final phase in Soviet policy, and that in a short time the Soviet Union will realise that the Jewish problem has not been solved. Israel must do its utmost so that when that moment arrives, the Soviet Union will consider

Jewish emigration to be the most convenient solution. He considers this to be the embassy's main task.

Harel received an invitation for a meeting at the Foreign Ministry. The head of the Middle East department, Erofeev, read the attached Note regarding the activities of members of the embassy staff in synagogues.[2] Harel replied that the Note was obviously based on false information and erroneous interpretation of polite conversations after the service. Harel promised to pass on the Note to his government.

Harel sums up his short sojourn in Moscow with the statement that one must be patient and unassuming in evaluating the situation and developing prognoses as to the future.

Notes

1. The meeting was limited to formalities and lasted for only ten minutes. Gromyko was polite and even cordial. In response to Harel's statement that he hoped to improve relations, Gromyko said that it was the inclination of the Soviet Union to develop its relations with all countries, but in some cases they did not find appropriate appreciation on the Israeli side. (See Harel to the East European Division, telegram 130, 6 March 1959, 130.09/27/6.)
2. See No. 355.

358. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Harel (Moscow). 6 July 1959

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Ben-Gurion refers to Harel's letter regarding Israel–U.S.S.R. relations[1] and the effect of the Germany–Israel arms deal upon the relations. Ben-Gurion writes that despite the fact that proposals such as those put forward by Harel were rejected by the Knesset some time ago,[2] he wishes to clarify a number of points. West Germany had no need of rehabilitation by Israel, just as East Germany has no need of rehabilitation by the U.S.S.R.. The purpose of the arms sale to Germany was not to balance the security budget. As regards its possible effect on East European Jewry, no matter what Israel does or does not do, it will be interpreted by the Soviets as an atrocious act, and thus the question is completely irrelevant. If the Russians wish to permit immigration to Israel, they will permit it, and if they do not, they will forbid it, whether or not Israel will sell arms to Germany. One East European

country permits immigration for its own reasons, and another does not permit it, despite undertaking to do so.[8]

As to Israel-U.S.S.R. relations, Harel, who is on the spot, is better equipped to judge than he is. Even so, he does not share Harel's optimism nor does he see any signs of progress. Vinogradov's comments to Tsur in Paris[3] are a deceptive as is Kozlov's statement in the United States.[7] All of his own attempts to negotiate with the Russians through the Russian ambassador in Israel[4] have been to no avail. The reasons for this attitude are to be found in Moscow, and Harel is well aware of them.

Notes

1. Harel's letter has not been found.
2. On 30 June, Ben-Gurion submitted the following motion to the Knesset: "The Knesset expresses its opinion against cancellation of the export of weapons to West Germany and proposes conducting a debate on this matter." (see *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Fourth Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXVII, p. 2377.) The motion passed on 1 July, by a vote of 57 in favour and 45 against, with six abstentions (ibid., p. 2416).
3. The reference is to a meeting between Tsur and the Soviet ambassador in France, Vinogradov, on 29 May 1958, at which Vinogradov claimed that improved relations between Soviet Union and Israel depended exclusively on the latter. "Show a willingness to improve relations and you will see that Moscow will reply favourably." (See Tsur to Eytan and others, 1 June 1958, 130.23/3115/10.)
4. The reference is evidently to a meeting that took place in July 1958; see No. 354.
5. The reference is to a series of invitations to scientists, government officials, and artists to visit Moscow in the summer of 1959, including the visit by MK David Hacohen in the context of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
6. The arms deal between Israel and West Germany that was approved by the Government of Israel on 14 December 1958.
7. Frol Kozlov, first deputy premier of the Soviet Union, who visited United States in late June and early July 1959, said that the Jews in the Soviet Union "lived better than those in Israel."
8. On emigration from Eastern Bloc countries–from Romania, which permitted it, and Hungary, which promised to allow it and then reneged–see chapter 18.
9. The telegram is in File 130.09/2327/6. The cartoon shows a ludicrous image of a Jew offering weapons to a Nazi.

359. A. Harel (Moscow) to the Director of the East European Division. 12 July 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3115/10

Harel reports on his meetings in Moscow. There are no positive developments in relations with the Foreign Ministry and with persons involved in foreign trade, although in a conversation with Kuznetzov some hints were dropped about renewing of commercial ties. Harel is of the opinion that the Soviet leadership is discussing the policy towards Israel and so long as a decision has not been taken a situation which he terms a "smiling impasse" will continue.[2] His attempts to create meaningful contacts with Soviet leaders such as Khrushchev and Mikoyan have been unsuccessful, and they continue to avoid practical conversations. This is also particularly obvious in relations with persons involved in foreign trade. On the other hand, relations with public figures are most cordial and reflect sympathy toward and interest in Israel.[7]

Notes

1. In the margin of this paragraph someone noted, "in Harel's telegram about this he wrote much more. The impression was that Kuznetsov knew about the visit of the circus and so on."
2. A note in the margin of this paragraph: "In my opinion there is no discussion and the impasse is not so smiling."
3. David Hacohen met with Zotov in April 1959, during a conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Nice. Zotov said that trade between Soviet Union and Israel in oil and citrus fruits would be renewed. Subsequent contacts between the Israel Embassy and Zotov yielded nothing.
4. Between the foreign ministers of the Arab countries and the Soviet Union with regard to Germany.
5. Note in the margin of this paragraph: "He is quite unimportant".
6. Note in the margin of this paragraph: "Pieve is not the chairman of the national Supreme Soviet but of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. He is quite unimportant."
7. Yehuda L. Gideon replied to this letter that, despite Harel's impression, relations were totally frozen, and the freeze stemmed not from expectation of an impending decision but from a clear decision to maintain it strictly and relentlessly (letter to Harel, 7 August 1959, 130.23/3115/10).

360. A. Harel (Moscow) to the Director of the East European Division. 23 September 1959

Coded Tel. 130.23/3115/10

Harel reports on his discussion with Deputy Foreign Minister Pushkin. The meeting was held following the failure of his attempts to meet with Khrushchev and Gromyko. He made these attempts because of the special atmosphere existing on the eve of Khrushchev's visit to the United States.[1]

Pushkin is a veteran professional diplomat, who speaks mildly and politely. During their conversation Harel touched on three main points: free passage through the Suez Canal and commercial and cultural relations. Pushkin pointed out that the Suez Canal issue should be seen as an integral part of Israel–Arab relations, and should be solved by direct negotiations. When Harel pressed him by demanding that the Russians support Israel's efforts to bring about such negotiations, Pushkin lost his confidence and withdrew his statement. Harel considers that this could possibly be a noncommittal inference to Israel, and perhaps a resolution could be introduced in the Security Council calling for negotiations with Israel. It would then be difficult for the Russians to veto a Security Council resolution regarding the Suez Canal.

As for commercial and cultural relations, Pushkin is in a rather uncomfortable situation in view of Khrushchev's numerous speeches against political discrimination in commerce and in support of increased cultural relations between East and West. Harel believes that this contradiction should be emphasized in Israeli publications.

Harel concludes that though the meeting did not lead to any progress, it stressed the large gap between the principles of the Soviet declared policy and its policy regarding Israel. The time is ripe to openly draw attention to this gap.

Notes

1. Khrushchev visited the United States in September 1959. He met with President Eisenhower and participated in the United Nations General Assembly. When Eisenhower brought up the issue of the Jews of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev replied that they enjoyed full equality. (See J. Herzog to the M.F.A., NWT871, 30 September 1959, 130.09/2314/9.) Khrushchev refused to meet with a Jewish delegation.
2. These were all stateless residents of the Soviet Union, or those refused permission to emigrate Israel, who had been arrested or exiled. The embassy handled their cases.

3. An Israeli government agency active in mobilizing public opinion in the West on behalf of immigration from Eastern Europe.
4. Eisenhower's visit to the Soviet Union, planned for the autumn of 1959, was postponed to the spring of 1960 and canceled after the downing of an American U2 spy plane over the Soviet Union in May 1960.

361. Editorial Note

The problem of Russian property in Israel

For years the Soviet government demanded that Israel recognize its ownership of various properties in Israel, some of them registered in its own name and others in the name of the "The Orthodox Palestine Society and Grand Duke Sergei". The position of the Israeli government was that if the Soviet government had claims to these properties, it could apply to Israeli courts to recognize them. The Soviet Union pressed Israel to arrange the matters through diplomatic channels and not through the courts. In September 1956, a ministerial committee on Russian property in Israel proposed that the government invite the Soviet embassy to begin negotiations toward a final settlement of all problems associated with Russian property in the country. If the Soviet response were affirmative, a negotiating committee would be appointed, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Finance. The idea was to permit the government to demonstrate a willingness in principle to negotiate, while safeguarding its control of essential properties and without committing the government in advance as to its final position. (See the minister of foreign affairs to the government secretary, 12 September 1956, in File 130.02/4116/1.)

362. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 16 October 1959

Orig.: 93.39/449/7

The Division passes on a memorandum[2] submitted by Ambassador Bodrov regarding Russian property in Israel.[1] It points out that at present the Russian property falls into two categories: property whose ownership by the Russians is recognized, and property whose ownership is in doubt. In the

meantime it has been decided to approve the rental of such property whose ownership is not in doubt.

Notes

1. See preceding Editorial Note.
2. The document, in Russian, is in the file, but has been omitted here. For the Israeli response, see the appendix to the present document.
3. These documents have not been found.
4. Not located, but the contents are enumerated in sections 3.
5. The translation of the Note is in File 93.39/449/7.

363. Meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem). 16 November 1959

Minutes: 130.23/3115/10

The meeting was attended by senior ministry personnel, led by J. Tsur, and senior personnel in government agencies dealing with Soviet Jewry, headed by S. Avigur. Tsur, who opened the discussion, stated that the purpose of the meeting was to examine the attitudes and policy of the U.S.S.R. towards Jews in general and Israel in particular in view of the recent exacerbation of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel manifestations in the U.S.S.R.. Since it is a well-known fact that in the U.S.S.R. nothing is fortuitous, it is obvious that the government is behind this wave of antisemitic and anti-Israel activities. The question arises as to what the Soviets' motives are, especially in view of the pressure being applied upon them in this matter by the West. This line of action is directly opposed to their international policy, which is aimed at moderating antagonism in anticipation of the forthcoming summit meeting.

Shimoni claimed that since Israel has no idea of what lies behind the Soviet policy, it does not know what to do in order to bring about a change in the situation. He raised a number of conjectures: the Arabs, deeply ingrained anti-Zionist and anti-Israel feelings, and competition between the major blocs to attract the African and Asian countries. As regards the Jewish issue, he does not discern maliciousness or a desire to wipe out the Jewish minority. In his opinion, their policy is the outcome of the lack of a solution to a problem that bothers them as well.

Avidar concurred with Shimoni's analysis and stressed the Afro-Asian aspect. Israel's activities in these countries is of concern to the Russians, who

prefer a direct struggle between them and the United States in this area and the status Israel is beginning to achieve there is of concern to them.

Avigur also agreed with Shimoni's analysis. He also mentioned oil as a factor. He believes that both Jewish and Israeli action is called for. Communism is not a monolithic entity and is undergoing changes. Some future regime will possibly enable some activity in this area. National awareness among Jews should be increased.

Tsur summed up by saying that they were unanimous in their analysis of the situation. He warned against extremist conclusions, such as that the U.S.S.R. intends to crush Israel physically. He said that the opinions expressed by this forum would constitute a basis for future action.

Notes

1. See No. 358 and n. 3 there.
2. The allusion is evidently to the Sixth International Festival of Students and Youth, held in Moscow in late July and early August 1957, under the sponsorship of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Many young people from Israel participated in the festival and took advantage of the relatively free atmosphere that prevailed in Moscow during the festival to make contacts with local Jews. These were accompanied by manifestations of national and Zionist awakening. (See Y. Ro'i, *The Struggle for Jewish Emigration 1948-1967*, pp. 261-268.)
3. The reference is to the repatriation of Polish citizens, many of them Jews, in 1956-1959.
4. Four books were published in Yiddish in 1959, including reprints of Sholem Aleichem and Mendele Mokher Seforim. This was the first Yiddish publication since 1948; see ibid., p. 277.
5. In October 1959, Goldmann announced in Paris that the international Jewish organizations did not intend to request an interview with Khrushchev during his forthcoming visit to France. He also said that the World Jewish Congress was not interested in turning the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union into a factor in the Cold War. He noted that there was no antisemitism in the Soviet Union but Jews were denied cultural and religious rights, despite their ostensible equality before the law. (See *Davar*, 29 October 1959.)
6. See No. 338, n. 3.

364. Meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem). 1 December 1959

Minutes: 130.23/3115/10

This second meeting, attended by the minister of foreign affairs, dealt with the predictions and proposals regarding Soviet Jewry and relations between Israel and the U.S.S.R.. Ambassador Harel opened by stating that he predicts an increase of Soviet pressure on the embassy and on Soviet Jews. He believes that this pressure will only increase national sentiment among the Jews. This is a sign that the Jewish issue is of concern to the Soviets and therefore encouragement of Soviet Jews should continue to be the embassy's main task—even up to the point of closing the embassy. The public should be kept continuously alert of this issue and the contradiction between Russian declarations and discrimination against Israel should be stressed. In deliberations at the United Nations, Israel should display a desire to improve relations with the Soviets, but without endangering its security interests or adversely affecting its relations with friendly states. He believes that in the long run the Soviets will have no choice but to solve the Jewish problem, and they will do this by applying pressure while simultaneously opening the gates to emigration. One can expect a twisting policy in the future, full of contradictions.

Avigur, on the other hand, warns against illusions. He does not see any sign of even the slightest change in Soviet policy toward the Middle East. They continue to base their policy on the Arabs, despite friction with Nasser, and Israel plays no role in it. Of course they do have global concerns and thus from time to time they smile in Israel's direction, but that has no practical significance. Their policy regarding Soviet Jews in their territory is assimilation through demoralization on the one hand, and by means of the temptations that Soviet society is able to offer on the other hand. There is disagreement as to the rate of assimilation and therefore reports should be accurate and care must be taken when discussing this issue with foreign representatives.

The minister of foreign affairs summed up the discussion by stating that there is no disagreement regarding Soviet policy in the Middle East. The cynical formula that Israel is important to the U.S.S.R. since attacks against it are an asset vis-à-vis the Arabs, appears to be true. The Jewish problem bothers them and was one of the two issues, the other being Hungary, that beclouded Khrushchev's visit to the United States. At the same time, the minister does not believe that the Americans will make either issue a condition in an agreement with the Soviet Union. It is a fact that the

Americans reached an agreement with Khrushchev despite the Jewish problem. As for the proposal to continue encouragement of Soviet Jews up to the point of having the embassy closed, the minister of foreign affairs recommends caution, for there is no knowing what could happen if the embassy were indeed closed.

Notes

1. The reference is to a decision by the Romanian government in early November to renew the immigration in the framework of family reunification; see chapter 18.
2. See No. 360, n. 1.
3. Anastas Mikoyan, first deputy premier of the Soviet Union, visited the United States in January 1959. While there he declared that there was no discrimination against Jews in the Soviet Union and they had every opportunity to develop their culture if they so desired.
4. See No. 358, n. 7.
5. This letter has not been found.
6. The charges lodged in January 1953 against a group of senior physicians, most of them Jewish, that they had tried to shorten the lives of Soviet leaders as part of a plot by foreign espionage agencies and the Joint Distribution Committee. The charges were dropped after Stalin's death about two months later; see Vol. 8, No. 11.

365. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 3 January 1958

Copy: 130.23/3087/12

Shiloah is sending Eban a copy of a memorandum he forwarded to the minister of foreign affairs[1] regarding Israel's attempts at association with NATO, following the NATO Council session in December 1957.[2] He does not know what will be the reaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister's Office to his proposals will be, but he is convinced that Israel should continue its efforts to strengthen its defensive ties with the West. During the course of his visits to Western European capitals on the eve of the NATO summit he learned that even the most avowed opponents of the expansion of NATO's responsibility understand that Europe cannot ignore the Middle East and that the fall of the Middle East would undermine the standing of the West in Asia and Africa and endanger the existence of a free Europe. However, there are a number of internal complications among the members of the Alliance concerning the manner in

which this is to be implemented. The solution that appears to be emerging is a practical bilateral arrangement for cooperation when needed. In fact, there are those who had believed that such arrangements already existed and were surprised to hear that this was not the case.

Even prior to the NATO Council meeting, many of the people with whom he spoke thought that Norstad and Spaak had sufficient authority to enter into such arrangements without requiring formal decisions and voting. The resolutions passed at the session granted even wider powers to the latter and also strengthened the standing of the permanent representatives of NATO and of its permanent bodies. In any event, it is clear to him that the United States is the key player and all the discussions in Europe and Turkey will at best be supplementary to the efforts in Washington. He believes that the basis for these activities should be the ideas put forward by Eban in his memorandum of 13 November 1957.[5] He has heard reactions to this memorandum in Europe and has received many requests for a copy of it. He is also of the opinion that the NATO meeting has not closed the door to any of the proposals made in that memorandum.

The doubts raised by participants in the Council session and the need to reach unanimous decisions led to compromises in the wording of the resolution resulting in weak and vague formulations. Yet, the Council resolution does express, albeit faintly, the main concept of Article V of the Eisenhower-Macmillan declaration:[6] "The free world must organize its resources—moral, military and economic—and be ready to deploy them wherever the situation demands. Our alliance cannot therefore be concerned only with the North Atlantic area or only with military defence. It must also organize its political and economic strength on the principle of independence and must take into account developments outside its own area." In the section dealing with the Middle East there is reference (although muted) to Israel's demand that the alliance issue a warning against attacks and threats to Middle Eastern countries.[7]

Practically speaking, Shiloah believes that a detailed proposal for contacts with the NATO command and the Sixth Fleet should be prepared that would be based on the term used by Eban: "the concept of association". It is sufficiently flexible so as to enable arrangements that do not require political negotiations. It is clear to him that Spaak and Norstad have the authority to make such arrangements, especially if they are aware that this is in keeping with United States' policy.

Notes

1. In File 130.23/3087/2. In this memorandum, dated 1 January 1958, Shiloah proposed, inter alia, to appoint a member of the staff of the Israel embassy in

Paris to cultivate ties with the executive agencies of NATO and the permanent missions accredited to the alliance. He also offered some suggestions for ways to improve relations with Turkey.

2. Between 16 and 19 December 1957 the NATO council met in Paris. On Israeli activity related to this, see Introduction, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.
3. The prime minister of the Netherlands, Wilem Drees.
4. Gen. Alfred Gruenther, NATO commander until November 1956, president of the American Red Cross, and a confidant of President Eisenhower, visited Israel in November 1957.
5. In File 130.23/37/12. In this memorandum Eban surveyed the Soviet penetration of the Middle East and proposed to restrain it through extensive economic assistance and security guarantees.
6. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan visited Washington on 23-25 October 1957. Section 5 of the joint communiqué issued at the end of his visit spoke about collective security arrangements against the peril of Communism and noted that about "50 free countries" were participating in such security arrangements. The communiqué added: "All members of this community, and other free nations which so desire, should possess more knowledge of the total capabilities of security that are in being and in prospect. There should also be provided greater opportunity to assure that this power will in fact be available in case of need for their common security, and that it will not be misused by any nation for purposes other that individual and collective self-defense as authorized by the Charter of the United Nations."
7. This paragraph expressed support for the independence and sovereignty of the countries of the region.
8. The appendix has not been located.
9. In the wake of published reports about the arms deal with West Germany; see chapter 8.
10. One paragraph, dealing with internal Ministry of Foreign Affairs matters, has been omitted.

366. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 7 January 1958

Copy: 130.23/3087/12

At the request of the minister of foreign affairs, Shiloah presents a summary of his activities in Western Europe in the light of events in Syria[1] and the meeting of the NATO Council.[2] This summary is the result of internal deliberations and exchange of information with the prime minister and officials in the Ministry of Defence. The discussions were based on the following assumptions:

1) The Middle East has become the main arena of the Cold War.

2) In its efforts to win over the Arab world, the U.S.S.R. will give the Arabs its unconditional support.

3) Since neither of the two superpowers wants a world war at the present moment, and the U.S.S.R. understands that a direct or indirect attack on Israel would bring about intervention by the West, it would be deterred by this prospect and dissuade its satellite states from attacking.

4) As in other regions, the Middle East conflict could end in compromise. Thus Israel must endure and ensure that when compromise is reached it will not be at Israel's expense.

5) The danger of competition between the two blocs to appease the Arabs at Israel's expense is a very real threat.

In view of the foregoing Israel's aims are as follows:

1) To deter the U.S.S.R. from taking such steps through an explicit statement by the West to the effect that an attack on Israel would result in a severe Western reaction.

2) To come to arrangement for ties and cooperation in defence with the West.

3) To convince the governments of the Western powers to aid Israel in improving and enhancing the armaments of the Israel Defence Forces.

In anticipation of the NATO Council meeting, Israel drew up a detailed program for information and political activities.[3] The program included immediate aims to be attained during the Council meeting and others to be implemented over a lengthier period of time. Israel's information efforts concentrated on three objectives: To cause the governments of the NATO countries to accept the main principle of Article 5 of the Macmillan-Eisenhower declaration;[4] to attain a NATO declaration to the effect that the strict observance of the independence and integrity of the Middle East countries is a basic principle of NATO members; to make all efforts to have the meeting empower the alliance's military and political branches to examine possibilities of contact and coordination with Israel.

In addition, Israel has acted to achieve long-term objectives, being fully aware that continued negotiations and persuasion would be required. The main aspect of this effort is the call for joint planning by Israel and the United States of American aid in the event that Israel were attacked by Communist controlled countries.

These activities have been carried out under difficult and complicated conditions, primarily due to conflicts among NATO members. Since NATO's main efforts are devoted to solving their internal conflicts this has had a negative affect on the Israeli campaign. Despite this, Israel has succeeded in fostering an awareness that there is interdependence between the security of the West and that of the Middle East and that it is essential to

reinforce the security of the pro-Western elements in the region, including Israel.

Israel's attempts to get NATO to adopt Article 5 of the Macmillan-Eisenhower declaration as its accepted policy has not been successful. The United States, Britain, and other countries are wary of aggravating the Arabs. The Scandinavians are reluctant to expand the areas of responsibility of NATO, and other states fear Anglo-American attempts to establish a sort of super leadership of the two Anglo-Saxon powers.

Israel's efforts to obtain a declaration deterring attacks against the independence and sovereignty of the countries of the Middle Eastern countries also encountered similar difficulties and hesitancy. The Scandinavians object to any explicit statement regarding the expansion of NATO responsibility while the British and the Turks fear that such a declaration could be interpreted as too pro-Israeli. The formulation agreed upon is a compromise:

> We have reviewed the situation in the Middle East. In line with the peaceful aims of our alliance, we confirm the support of our governments for the independence and sovereignty of the states in this region, and our interest in the economic wellbeing of their peoples. We believe that the stability of this area is vital to world peace.

In the course of discussions held by Israel in Western Europe, many friends have advised us to seek bilateral relations with those NATO members directly involved in the area and especially with the United States. They have also suggested trying to foster direct relations with NATO's operational bodies. In their opinion, these bodies have the authority and are able to establish relationships and engage in planning with non-members of the Alliance.

The issue of arming and strengthening Israel was not brought up directly or indirectly at the NATO Council, but great efforts were made to raise it in various capitals, with the participation of Ministry of Defence personnel. Details cannot be given, but it can be said that in a number of capitals practical results of these discussions are already evident.

In sum, Israel has not achieved its goals in their entirety, but there is progress in all areas. These efforts must be continued and plans for future action should be drawn up. He will report his suggestions at a later date.

Notes

1. On 17 August, a purge of the senior echelons command of the Syrian army was conducted. Col. Afif Bizri, who had Communist sympathies, was named chief of staff. The Soviet Union and Syria signed an arms deal on 27 October.

2. See No. 365.
3. In File 130.19/4374/14.
4. See No. 365 and n. 6 there.
5. The doctrine was approved by Congress on 7 March 1957 and signed by the president on 9 March. Its operative sections authorized the president to use armed force to assist any country in the Middle East that requested military assistance against armed aggression by any state controlled by international Communism, so long as this was compatible with United States treaty obligations and the constitution.
6. To the NATO council meeting in December 1957. In the event Eisenhower did not attend.
7. A plan drafted by the British in 1955. It called for a solution of the Middle East conflict based on British and American guarantees and the truncation of Israel's borders; see No. 298 and n. 3 there.
8. At a meeting between Sasson and Menderes on 16 December 1957, the latter stated that Turkey intended to tell the NATO Council that the Israel-Arab conflict was the main factor in Middle East tensions, but did not intend to recommend particular solutions. (See Sasson to the M.F.A., telegram 22, 16 December 1957, 130.15/3752.14.)
9. See No. 367.

367. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 12 January 1958

Copy: 130.23/3087/12

Shiloah is sending for the perusal of the minister of foreign affairs and the ministry's senior personnel his proposals for the continuation of political efforts in Western capitals, which Israel began following events in Syria and in anticipation of the NATO summit meeting.[1]

Following are his basic assumptions:

1) The Middle East continues to be the focus of the Cold War.

2) The Soviet Union is continuing its penetration of the area.

3) Exploitation of anti-Israel sentiments continues unabated in Soviet policy and propaganda.

4) The danger of competition between the East and the West to appease the Arabs is a viable threat.

In the light of these assumptions, the following objectives for Israel's political efforts should be set:

1) The Soviet Union should be deterred from any action detrimental to Israel by a strong warning from the West.

2) Attempts should be made to attain coordination with the West in matters relating to defence.

3) Continued efforts should be made to strengthen the Israel Defence Forces.

In order to attain these goals, greater efforts should be made in the United States, with NATO's operative bodies, and in the capitals of Western Europe. In order to coordinate these activities, a joint committee of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence should be set up, and a senior member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs be appointed to direct this operation.[7]

Notes

1. See No. 366.
2. Waiting for an answer to Sasson's January 1958 note to Menderes; see No. 409.
3. In File 130.02/2449/2.
4. Of section 5; see No. 365. The meeting took place on 31 October and was broad and comprehensive. Eban characterized the atmosphere as extremely warm and concluded it with an announcement that he would submit to Dulles a list of types of weapons that Israel was requesting. Dulles replied that he agreed to Israeli participation in such talks. (The telegram is in File 93.01/2215/3).
5. General Gruenther; see No. 365 and n. 4 there.
6. See n. 2 above and chapter 16.
7. This memorandum was approved by Golda Meir; see No. 368.

368. G. Avner (Jerusalem) to J. Herzog (Washington). 9 April 1958

Orig.: 93.08/416/22

From reading the report of the embassy staff deliberations conducted on 31 March[1] Avner has the impression that the embassy staff in Washington have a mistaken conception of the attitude of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the issue of an association with NATO for defence purposes. He stresses that this matter is on the agenda and, among other things, was included in the instructions sent to the ambassador prior to his meeting with Dulles.[4] True, there is some disagreement as to the feasibility of this initiative, and in fact only a small minority believes that it can be implemented under the present circumstances. The prime minister and minister of foreign affairs do not belong to this minority. Thus the embassy

is instructed to consider this matter continuously and examine whether the time is ripe to proceed with this initiative.

Notes

1. No details of this consultation have been found.
2. No. 367.
3. See Shiloah the Eban, 10 February 1958, 130.23/3087/12.
4. See the United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington, W719, 26 February 1958, 130.09/2312/5.

369. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to R. Shiloah and the Heads of Israel Missions in NATO Countries. 17 April 1958

Copy: 130.23/3087/12

Fischer instructs Israeli representatives to bring to the attention of the foreign ministers of NATO members about to convene in Copenhagen the danger of Soviet penetration into the Middle East. He lists ten arguments to be used, the essence of which is that the West must play a more forceful role in the area and persuade these countries not to attempt to win over the Arab states by concessions at Israel's expense. He encloses a memorandum prepared by Eban on the subject.[4]

Notes

1. In April-May 1958; see No. 349.
2. The reference is to the turmoil in Jordan in April 1957 against the background of the leftist inclinations of the Jordanian government. The king dismissed his government, arrested many military and police officers, and set up a new government. During these events Hussein relied on the fact that the United States had sent units of the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean.
3. This document has not been found.
4. In File 130.23/3087/12.
5. Shiloah was in Copenhagen during the conference. In the report that he submitted (dated 23 May 1958, in File 130.23/3111/27) he wrote that the Israel-Arab situation was not raised in the discussions.
6. In April-May 1958; see No. 349.

370. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 August 1958

Coded Tel. 178; Inc.: 130.09/2348/6

The minister of foreign affairs has met with Spaak,[1] who stated that he is now more optimistic than he was a few weeks earlier. He is certain that the Soviet Union does not intend to launch a war, least of all in the Middle East. At the same time, he warned Israel regarding the West's tendency to shift its Middle Eastern policy in the direction of conciliation with Nasser and Arab nationalism. This policy is adhered to especially by Germany, Italy and Greece, but the British and Americans are also inclined to follow. In any case, even those so inclined have no intention of doing so at Israel's expense. In general, in all the discussions he has held recently the basic, self-evident, premise is that Israel's security and sovereignty must be guaranteed and they aspire to do so in agreement with the Russians that the status quo must be maintained. He has heard similar reactions from Vinogradov, the Soviet ambassador in Paris. Spaak pointed out that such a program is also fraught with numerous difficulties, especially in regard to the Russian interpretation of the status quo regarding Israel's borders. Furthermore, the concept of status quo is a double-edged sword because the Russians could demand a similar undertaking regarding the borders of Eastern Europe.

The minister of foreign affairs brought to Spaak's attention the dangers facing other countries in the region, such as Iran and Sudan. She pointed out that even if Israel were to decide that maintaining the status quo was the solution for its relations with the Russians, it could not be attained without a clear and unequivocal undertaking by the West to protect all countries in the region that have not come under Soviet control. Spaak asked whether Israel would be content with a guarantee by the United Nations. When the minister of foreign affairs replied in the negative, Spaak agreed that it is difficult to rely on Hammarskjöld and that this is the general feeling in the West.

The minister of foreign affairs and Tsur came away with the feeling that Spaak does not believe that NATO powers can be relied upon unless the United States takes a strong stand. Tsur requested that the very fact that the meeting had taken place be kept secret.

Notes

1. The minister of foreign affairs, who was then in Paris for a meeting with de Gaulle, also participated in the meeting.
2. Iraq quit the Baghdad Pact in March 1959.

371. M. Gazit (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 9 March 1959

Copy: 130.23/3111/28

Gazit reports on a meeting with the prime minister in which a decision was taken to renew the efforts for Israel's association with NATO.[2] It is proposed that in her upcoming meeting with Debré[5] and perhaps with Couve de Murville,[6] the minister of foreign affairs propose that France should be the sponsor of this initiative. It is also proposed to approach NATO member states while pointing to the seriousness of the Berlin crisis and stating that in Israel's opinion NATO should draw the strategic conclusions from this crisis in relation to the Middle East. It should be proposed that contacts be made with one of the NATO command in order to carry out joint planning, or perhaps arrangements should be made for one or two members to have special and secret contacts with Israel. Gazit points out that conditions are better for such an initiative this time because it would not be made within the context of the Middle East conflict but rather against the background of the deterioration of the status of West's bases in Dhahran, Libya, and Morocco, a situation that exposes Iran and Turkey to danger. Furthermore, over the past two years NATO's conceptions have undergone some change,[7] as reflected in the December 1957 declaration. While approaching France, similar overtures should be made to Washington and London and information campaigns mounted in other countries. In order to prevent an embarrassing failure, these approaches should be of an exploratory nature.

Notes

1. In the first half of March 1959 Golda Meir was in United States on a lecture tour on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal. On her way back to Israel she made a working visit to France.
2. See a report on this meeting in File 130.02/4315/2.
3. See ibid.
4. The appendix is in the file but has been omitted here.
5. See Nos. 373 and 374.
6. Meir spoke briefly with Couve de Murville in Tsur's residence; see No. 374.
7. See No. 366.
8. Lt. Gen. William Riley was chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine from 1948 to 1953. In 1955 he was named head of the American aid mission in Turkey.
9. See No. 379.

372. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Washington). 13 March 1959

Copy: 130.23/3111/28

Shiloah brings Meir up to date on the decision to renew the initiative for a defensive association with NATO. In the background are international events, especially the Berlin crisis and developments in the Middle East conflict that have undermined the standing of the West. Shiloah's conclusion is that Israel must renew its efforts to emerge from its isolation in security matters and to attain defence arrangements with the West. In his opinion the time is ripe for a renewed effort. During the past year NATO agencies and policy makers have taken a greater interest in the security of the Middle East. This was reflected in the deliberations at the NATO Council meeting in December 1957 and the resolutions passed there. The session concluded with a declaration to the effect that the security and sovereignty of the states of the Middle Eastern countries are essential for world peace. Since then, the situation in the Middle East has been discussed at other meetings and a special committee has been established to plan NATO's policy in that region. During this year there has also been a change in relations between Israel and the heads of Western governments, manifested in meetings and correspondence. On the other hand, the standing of the West in the region has deteriorated. The military base in Dhahran is no longer at its disposal and its status in Libya and Morocco has declined.

This being the case, Shiloah presented the senior staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and later the prime minister, with a proposal to renew the initiative and his suggestion has been accepted. At the meeting with the prime minister, only Sh. Peres expressed reservations as he considers the time to be inappropriate for such an initiative.[4] Shiloah believes that the effort should be made on three levels: (1) High-level negotiations in the capitals of the three Western powers; (2) Contacts with specific officials at NATO headquarters and at the Pentagon; (3) Information campaigns in the capitals of the other NATO member states. The aim is not to strive for security pacts or membership in NATO, but rather to explain the need for mutual planning and provision for the future while maintaining maximum organizational flexibility. The assumption is that should one of the NATO members be charged with examining the situation and the problems involved, it might be possible to bring about NATO recognition of the urgent necessity to strengthen Israel in infrastructure and equipment.

Shiloah sums up by stating that in his opinion the time is right to make the concern for Israel's security the concern of the entire free world.

Notes

1. See No. 371, n. 1. During her stay abroad Meir's chef de bureau, Mordechai Gazit, provided her with regular reports.
2. The reference is to the communications from Ben-Gurion to Eisenhower dated 24 July 1958 (see No. 27) and to de Gaulle, dated 26 July 1958 (see No. 32).
3. See, for example, Meir's meetings with de Gaulle (No. 277), with Selwyn Lloyd (No. 304), and with John Foster Dulles (No. 216).
4. See No. 371.
5. Pella, who was foreign minister from May 1957 until June 1958, returned to the portfolio in February 1959. In March 1959 he made an official visit to Paris, during which Meir met with him; see Nos. 374 and 376.
6. At the meeting, which took place on 22 February 1959, de Gaulle said that France must be prudent in its external manifestations of friendship for Israel; see No. 282.

373. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister. 16 March 1959

Coded Tel. 551; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

Tsur reports on Meir's conversations with the French prime minister Debré. Two urgent matters regarding the Middle East were discussed: The coup in Sudan[1] and the British plan to create a Greater Somalia.[2] Regarding the latter, Debré requested Israel's intervention in Washington to countermine this plan, stressing that it is not in the interests of the West to create a new large Muslim state. The minister of foreign affairs promised that Israel would continue its efforts against the plan. She also raised the matter of Israel's association with NATO as outlined in Shiloah's memorandum.[3] Although the reaction was positive, the prime minister, based on their experience, has reservations on the method of action. The minister of foreign affairs will report the details on her return.

Notes

1. On 17 November 1958 a military coup in the Sudan brought Gen. Abbud to power.
2. In the waning days of World War II the British devised a Greater Somalia plan, which envisioned a union of British Somaliland, French Somaliland (Djibouti), Italian Somalia, and the Ogaden province of Ethiopia.
3. No. 372. See also No. 374.

374. J. Tsur (Paris) to R. Shiloah (Jerusalem). 20 March 1959

Copy: 130.23/3120/23II

Tsur adds details about Golda Meir's meeting with Debré.[1] The French premier agrees that special attention should be paid to security problems in the Middle East, but does not believe that salvation will come from NATO's political bodies. He revealed that France is having difficulty finding anyone prepared to listen to its own problems in the western Middle East and it has come up against strong opposition from the Scandinavian and Benelux countries to the expansion of the area of responsibility of the alliance. He advised contacting General Norstad and the alliance's military bodies. Mrs. Meir replied that Israel does not have any contact with Norstad and proposed that he be approached by French military officers rather than by Israel. The prime minister was hesitant in replying and it seems that he cannot take a decision in the matter without consultation with General de Gaulle. Couve de Murville, whom the minister of foreign affairs met socially, also refrained from relating to this proposal.

Mrs. Meir also discussed the matter with Pella.[3] He agrees with the proposal in general terms, praises Israel's stability and resistance, and has promised to continue to deal with the matter as soon as he reaches Rome.

For his own part, Tsur is doubtful, not about the connection with NATO, but about that organization's ability and willingness to deal with matters outside Europe at this time. NATO has a number of weak links that object to its expansion outside Europe. He believes that it is preferable to concentrate Israel's efforts on individual powers which, if they so desire, would then raise the matter before their allies.

Notes

1. See, for example, No. 373.
2. No. 372.
3. On the meeting with Pella, see also No. 329.
4. See No. 376.

375. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan. 31 March 1959

Copy: 130.23/3111/28

Following his discussions with the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces, Shiloah proposes a plan of action for the interaction of Israel with the West's security system in the region. The chief of staff should prepare a plan of action and try to coordinate it with the Turkish authorities so that both countries act together vis-à-vis NATO and the U.S. This would be followed by information and preparatory activities for politicians and military personnel in NATO command positions in the United States, Paris and Naples. After that he himself would go to the U.S. to hold talks and clarifications.[2] Political discussions as a follow-up to Golda Meir's talks in Paris would also be conducted in Italy and Bonn.

Notes

1. In the context of the special relations with Turkey that developed at the time, periodic meetings were scheduled between the chiefs of staff of the two countries.
2. Shiloah died in May 1959 before he could carry out this mission.
3. The task was assigned to Eliahu Elath; see No. 378.
4. The mission was assigned to Katriel Salmon, an official in the Ministry of Finance, formerly the I.D.F. attaché in United States, who had maintained contacts with American military personnel; see No. 380.

376. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 11 April 1959

Coded Tel. 347; Inc.: 130.09/2358/6

Sasson spoke with Straneo, director-general of the political division of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who wished to know what had developed regarding Israel's overtures for association with NATO. He said that his foreign minister was impressed by the Israeli argument.[1] Without stating it specifically, he gave Sasson the impression that his foreign minister has put out feelers to the members of his government and the general staff and has received positive feedback.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 374.
2. Shiloah replied that he had not had time to consult with the minister of foreign affairs and therefore the answer should be that at present Israel had put out only feelers and the responses were in general favourable. (See Shiloah to the Israel Embassy in Rome, telegram 494, 14 April 1959, 130.09/2258/5.)

377. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 13 April 1959

Coded Tel. W510; Outg.: 130.23/3111/28

In pursuance of his telegram (No. 500),[1] Shiloah reports to Eban and Herzog regarding the comments by the director-general of the political division of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Straneo, who requested information about developments concerning Israel's contacts for its possible association with NATO. According to Straneo, Foreign Minister Pella considers the time ripe to bring up the matter,[2] but for various reasons does not want appear at NATO as the initiator of the proposal. Shiloah adds that he will continue to keep them posted regarding developments, but requests that they expedite the talks proposed by the minister of foreign affairs as per his above mentioned telegram.[4]

Notes

1. In this telegram (dated 9 April 1959, in File 130.23/3111/29), Shiloah reported on a meeting he had with Arthur Dean (an attorney and confidant of the Dulles) about an agreement between Israeli and NATO. He added that Golda Meir recommended that Eban and Herzog hold meetings about this with Bedell Smith, General Gruenther, and Clay. For the moment was no point in contacts with the State Department or the Pentagon.
2. See No. 374.
3. See No. 370.
4. Herzog replied that he had spoken was Bedell Smith, who answered that he saw no real prospects with the present administration. He recalled that in December 1957 he had expressed the opinion that it was essential to strengthen ties with individuals and institutions in NATO.

378. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in London and Paris. 28 April 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 632; Outg.: 130.02/2378/1

Shiloah cables to Elath instructions and lines of argument to be followed at his talks with General Gale. The argumentation contained in his letter to the minister of foreign affairs of 13 March,[1] a copy of which Elath has received, should be followed. He should stress the deterioration in the situation during the past months, particularly in Iraq and Iran, and the increased Soviet activity in the United Arab Republic and the Yemen. The Soviet Union is continuing to rapidly arm Egypt and train its forces. From information that has reached Israel, the arms and equipment that have accumulated in the United Arab Republic are well beyond those required for war and the defence of the U.A.R. itself and there is a growing apprehension that the Soviets are stockpiling them in Egypt and Syria for future use when the time comes. Turkey, with whom Israel maintains an ongoing relationship, shares these apprehensions. In view of all this, Shiloah proposes that in his meeting with Gale, Elath should approach the issue as if requesting advice on how to strengthen the deployment of Turkey and Israel and how to bring about contact between Israel and the European defence alignments. Israel is aware of the political difficulties involved in full membership in NATO, but for the moment is striving to make an association with NATO's military bodies, or individually with some of its member states. Elath is requested to ascertain Gale's views on this matter and if he recommends contact with some states, to inquire which ones should be approached. Shiloah also wishes to know Gale's view about establishing contact between the General Staff in Israel and one of the NATO headquarters in Europe. Shiloah instructs Elath to address his report on the meeting to the minister of foreign affairs.[2]

Notes

1. No. 372.
2. The meeting with Gale took place on 4 May in Paris. Gale said that he shared the Israeli assessment of the situation in the region and would continue to try to clarify Israel's question. He would provide an answer when he had something to report. (See Elath to the minister of foreign affairs, telegram 783, 4 May 1959, 130.23/3111/28.) See also No. 379.

379. R.N. Gale [Paris] to E. Elath (London). 26 May 1959

Note

1. See No. 378.

380. Meeting of the Senior Staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem). 21 June 1959

Report: 130.02/4315/2

Reports of talks and meetings on the matter of association with NATO were presented to the forum. Elath reported on his meeting with Gale and the latter's reply.[1] Elath's conclusion is that there is a basis for sounding out Britain and perhaps a meeting should be arranged with the prime minister, who is friendly. He should not be approached with a specific request, but rather for advice on how to proceed in this matter.

Salmon reported on his meeting with Brown, Commander Allied Forces South He believes that NATO does face a problem in the eastern Mediterranean region. He favours contacts for planning and mutual acquaintance and also the preparation of joint contingency plans with Israel and Turkey, but is afraid that any proposal initiated by him would arouse apprehension within NATO, which has parochial and interest-laden tendencies. He praised Spaak and Norstad for their work in NATO. He pointed to a problem: it is not clear what concrete form of connection or contact Israel wants at this stage. A body or unit should be created together with the Israel Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence to clarify exactly what Israel wants. At any rate, meetings with Spaak should continue.

Eytan pointed out that despite the explorative manner in which the matter has been dealt with up to now, it has had a binding effect. It can presumed that our interlocutors have reported to the right places and it can also be presumed that they will continue the contacts on their own initiative.

Eytan sums up the meeting by stating that a meeting between the minister of foreign affairs and Spaak is important.[3] He will talk to Gilbert.[4] Thought must be given as to how the matter is handed in Israel, in which the military establishment must also take part, and how to enthuse those who are dealing with the matter.

Notes

1. See No. 379.
2. No report on this meeting has been found.
3. On her way back to Israel from her tour of Latin America. No report of a meeting with Spaak in June 1959 has been found and is not clear whether it in fact took place.
4. Frequent meetings were held with Gilbert, but no report of a conversation on these subjects has been found.

381. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 28 March 1958

Copy: 130.23/3087/12

Bartur transmits a copy of Shneerson's cable regarding his conversation with Cahan, deputy secretary-general of the O.E.E.C.[1] Cahan's arguments seem to be typical of the difficulties Israel can expect to encounter, even in pursuance of its most modest aim: the establishment of a study group for matters concerning Israel. His reaction is indicative of the disposition of the permanent representatives to the organization although the attitudes of the governments may be more amenable. In any event, Israel will have to confront these arguments when it submits its formal request to set up the study group.

Bartur then lists Cahan's arguments. The claim that the continued existence of the O.E.E.C. is uncertain is indicative of a transient state of mind and it is unreasonable to assume that the West would by its own initiative willingly destroy one of the most efficient instruments of cooperation in Western Europe. Fear of the Arabs is undoubtedly the most decisive of Cahan's reservations. Since Israel is aware of this difficulty, its request is most moderate–neither membership, nor association, but only the establishment of a study group. Each of the member states of the O.E.E.C. has up till now stood up commendably against the Arab boycott and it is not conceivable that they will make a less courageous stand collectively than they do as individual states.

Regarding further action, Bartur instructs the envoys to increase their efforts to clarify the attitudes of the governments of the countries to which they are accredited regarding Israel's request for the establishment of a study group. They should not be satisfied with evasive answers and should try to obtain clear statements. In their discussions it should be stressed that Israel is considering the introduction of a global quota, as well as the

possibility of partial liberalization towards O.E.E.C. member states, as Finland has done.

He requests immediate action and a speedy reply.[4]

Notes

1. The telegram, dated 17 March, is in the file, but has been omitted here. Shneerson noted that Cahan was extremely candid and noted that the situation had changed since his previous meeting with the Israelis and there was now no chance of setting up a study group. For the same reason he asked to postpone his visit to Israel. The factors that had changed were: (1) the fears for the continued existence of the O.E.E.C. after the establishment of the free-trade zone; (2) developments in the Middle East, chiefly the establishment of the United Arab Republic; (3) the fear that negotiations with Israel might harm the plan advanced by Pella, the Italian foreign minister, for development of countries in the Middle East; (4) the situation in North Africa and the instability of the French government.
2. The reference is to talks held since 1956 among the members of the O.E.E.C. concerning the establishment of a free-trade area, which would lead to a reduction in custom barriers and the elimination of import quotas. In 1959 it became clear that there were no prospects for this, chiefly because of disagreements between Great Britain and France.
3. See, for example, Bartur to Israel missions, 27 November 1957, with its attachments, in File 130.06/1946/1. Here Bartur informed them of a meeting of the inter-ministerial committee on the Common Market and O.E.E.C., with the participation of the minister of foreign affairs, minister of finance, and the minister of commerce and industry. It was decided to probe the relevant countries concerning their stand on Israel's inclusion in the O.E.E.C.
4. In April, Bartur summarized the reactions that had been received from the missions as follows: In Sweden, Norway, and Austria there was willingness to support Israel's request. In Switzerland, Germany, and also in the Netherlands there had been cautious expressions of a sympathetic attitude. The reactions in Britain had not been encouraging. They were still waiting for replies from the other European capitals. (See Bartur to Prato, 20 April 1958, 130.06/1946/5.)

382. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 11 May 1958

Copy: 130.06/1946/6

Bartur requests a report on progress regarding Israel's attempts at association with the European economic unions and the O.E.E.C. At the meeting of the Council of Europe,[1] which Israel attended with the status of

observer, the official charged with reporting on the free trade area, Mr. John Hay, submitted a report on Israel's request. He did this in a most satisfactory manner, stressing the strong economic ties between Israel and Western Europe. This report was made by the Council's Economic Committee, which also established a sub-committee to maintain contact with non-members of the O.E.E.C. that have common economic interests with countries in the free trade zone (Finland, Yugoslavia, Spain, and Israel were mentioned specifically). The committee seems friendly and is planning to visit Israel in September on a study mission.

Regarding Israel's association with European economic organizations, it seems that it may be possible to skip the study group stage and, with the help of the O.E.E.C., to try reach a multilateral agreement with all of the member states. Finland had done this by replacing its bilateral agreements with the organization's member states with a multilateral agreement, whose main provisions are the introduction of general import quotas for members states, and, at a later stage, a larger extent of liberalization on a reciprocal basis and payment agreements. Should Israel receive positive reactions from those members of the organization that it approaches, it will then submit such a request to the committee of heads of delegations to the O.E.E.C. Bartur sums up with the opinion that it now seems that the prospects of association with the European economic organizations are promising. Whether it materializes, and at what speed, much depends on the manner in which Israel deals with the matter.

Notes

1. The Council of Europe, with its headquarters in Strasbourg, was established in 1949 to serve as a forum for discussions of ideas that could promote international cooperation in social, economic, cultural, and similar matters. It had an advisory function only. Most of the countries of Western Europe participated, as well as Greece and Turkey. Starting in January 1958, an Israeli delegation sat in with observer status and took advantage of the opportunity to bring up with various participants Israel's interest in being included in the work of the O.E.E.C. and the free-trade area, should it be established.
2. The appendices have not been found.
3. The European Payment Union was established by the O.E.E.C. It served as a monthly clearing-house for the debts of member states. The organization ceased operations in 1958.

383. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 24 June 1958

Copy: 130.06/1946/6

Bartur is attaching copies of letters sent to the diplomatic representatives of Western European countries in Israel regarding Israel's request to sign a multilateral agreement with them.[1] These letters have been sent to the representatives of Austria, Italy, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, France, Britain, Sweden and Switzerland. No decision has yet been taken as regards Turkey, Greece and West Germany and it has been decided not to apply to Portugal or Iceland. He also encloses a copy of the proposed draft agreement. He assumes that the letters have already reached their destination and requests that the envoys find the way to take the matter up locally and report back to Israel.[2]

Notes

1. The various versions of the Notes, along with the draft of the agreement, are in the file but have been omitted here.
2. Of the 13 countries to whom the Note was sent, eight had responded by the end of November 1958; see No. 385.

384. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Brussels. 7 October 1958

Copy: 130.06/1946/21

Bartur encloses an aide-mémoire about the European Economic Community customs discrimination against Israeli exports and requests him to pass it on to the chairman of the E.E.C.'s Commission in Brussels.[1] Also enclosed is an official letter to be presented to the Belgian Foreign Ministry. Similar letters will be submitted to other member states of the market.[2]

Notes

1. The memorandum is on file but has not been printed here. The European Commission had nine members. They were not considered to be representatives of their countries and their activity was guided by the interests of the Common Market.

Their function was to oversee implementation of the Treaty of Rome, the document that established the European Economic Community.

2. The memorandum was submitted to Walter Hallstein, the president of the European Commission, on 30 October 1958. He promised "swift attention and a sympathetic approach." (See Rafael to the M.F.A., 30 October 1958, 130.06/1946/21.) Later in November the memorandum was submitted to the six countries affected. See also No. 386.

385. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 25 November 1958

Copy: 93.04/769/11

Bartur updates the envoys about developments regarding Israel's request for association with the O.E.E.C.[1] He lists chronologically the replies Israel has received from those countries it has approached on this matter. Sweden, Great Britain, Denmark and the Benelux countries have replied in the affirmative. Norway, Austria, and Switzerland have expressed reservations, Ireland[4] and Iceland have not given a positive reply, while replies from Germany, France, and Italy are still awaited, and it is believed that these will be positive. Israel is therefore in the last phase of the "first round," which constitutes obtaining agreement in principle from the countries to which it has applied. Israel has reported to the O.E.E.C. secretariat and has received important information regarding the technicalities involved in the introduction of the multilateral method. He believes that negotiations will begin during the first months of 1959.[5]

Notes

1. This letter (in File 93.04/770/1) presents an interim summary of the replies to the Israeli Note about the O.E.E.C.; see No. 383. For an updating of the responses as found in the present document see the summary prepared by the Economic Division on 17 April 1959, in File 130.06/1946/10.
2. In File 93.04/770/1.
3. For the Irish reply and the other replies, see File 130.06/1946/8.
4. Given Ireland's position Israel made no further approaches to it.
5. In meetings between Bartur and heads of the O.E.E.C. it was agreed that negotiations would begin in Paris during the week of 28 June 1959 (see Bartur to the M.F.A., 23 May 1959, 130.06/1946/10). On further developments in this affair, see No. 389.

386. G. Rafael (Brussels) to M. Bartur (Jerusalem). 14 January 1959

Orig.: 130.06/1946/22

Rafael transmits an aide-mémoire he has received from the European Economic Community in reply to the Israeli memorandum of 30 October.[1] In the course of the conversation conducted on that occasion with Mr. Seeliger, director-general of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Community and with Mr. Faniel of that department,[2] at the time the memorandum was submitted, they stressed that the Community has not yet developed a standing in the area of foreign relations. However, they intend to deal with all problems in a pragmatic manner, with the objective of strengthening cooperation with bodies that are not members of the Community. They expressed their desire to hold discussions with Bartur during his visit to Brussels. The main problem is that of customs duties on citrus fruit, but in Rafael's opinion a request should be made to reduce by ten percent duties imposed by those member states of the Community that import Israeli agricultural products without quotas, similar to the reduction on industrial products.

Notes

1. See No. 384. For the European Economic Community's aide-mémoire see the Main Volume, pp. 713-714.
2. At the meeting Seeliger added a number of explanations: (1) The institutions of the Common Market were interested in mutual cooperation, placed a high value on Israel as a political and economic factor, and were prepared to take account of its concerns. (2) The Common Market governments had to implement the discounts they had agreed to grant to third parties; every member state was permitted to give more than had been agreed. (3) The Common Market institutions were willing to begin talks with Israeli experts about special problems, such as citrus fruit. (4) They would be willing to meet with Bartur during his next visit to Brussels, but noted that the intention was to discuss details and not general policy. (See Rafael to the M.F.A., 14 January 1959, telegram 504, 130.09/2300/12.)
3. This body, which comprised the foreign ministers of the members of the European Economic Community, was the supreme institution of the Community.
4. This document has not been found.

387. Report from the Meeting of Israel Representatives in Brussels. [February 1959]

Report: 130.06/1946/22

The meeting was held on 26–27 January in Brussels with the participation of the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the assistant director-general for economic affairs and Israeli envoys in Western Europe.

Bartur, assistant director-general for economic affairs, reviewed the processes of unification and integration taking place in Europe. This is an inevitable process, having as its objectives the fulfilment of the European countries' desire to play an ever-increasing role in the markets of the free world, the conduct of free international commerce, the raising of the standard of living, technological development, and the expansion of the international market.

It is in Israel's vital interest to find a way to associate with these unions. Sixty percent of its trade is conducted with these regions and there is also much affinity with them in the field of technology. Association with this bloc will also assist Israel in raising investment capital.

There are a number of problems of immediate relevance regarding relations with the O.E.E.C. and the Common Market, primarily customs duties and quotas. Israel's agricultural exports could be adversely affected if preference is given to Algerian and Italian citrus fruit, and its industrial exports will have to compete with preferential treatment among member countries.

After some consideration, Israel has decided that the best way to approach these unions is by applying to member states of the O.E.E.C. and signing multilateral agreements with the majority of them. The aim is to achieve a policy of liberalization similar to that existing between these states, which would enable Israel to obtain benefits without formal membership of the organization. Israel has already sent Notes[2] and received positive replies from the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain and the Benelux countries.

Israel has also sent an aide-mémoire to the Common Market with specific requests.[3] It is presumed that informal discussions will begin in the spring.

Gideon Rafael outlined three lines of action: 1. Continued efforts to attain some sort of status vis-à-vis the O.E.E.C. that would serve as the basis for arrangements with the Common Market and with an even wider trade area. 2. To establish such contact with the Common Market that would enable the holding of official discussions and contacts on practical issues. 3. Not to neglect bilateral negotiations, for this is Israel's strongest point, and not to entertain illusions.

The director-general concluded the deliberations by stating that Israel's main aim is to find a way to adjust to the new reality now developing. It is still early to talk of integration or even of association, and at this stage ways must be sought to draw closer to the European institutions and organizations. Israel is not unique in this situation, and support and common interests must be sought with countries in a similar condition, such as Brazil and Australia. He proposes that the ambassador to Brussels be accredited to the Common Market.[6]

Notes

1. The non-governmental Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference was held in Cairo from 26 December 1957 to 1 January 1958.
2. See No. 383.
3. See No. 384.
4. An international organization to facilitate international trade, established in Geneva in 1947. The organization set itself the goal of the gradual elimination of trade and customs barriers. Israel joined as a provisional member in 1959 and as a permanent member in 1962.
5. The reference is to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg; see No. 382.
6. The minister of foreign affairs, in a letter dated 23 January 1959 (in File 130.06/1946/22), asked the president of the European Economic Community to confirm the accreditation Gideon Rafael as the Israeli representative. The confirmation was forthcoming (see Hallstein to Golda Meir, 21 April 1959, 130.06/1946/23).

388. R. Nirgad (Cologne) to M. Bartur (Jerusalem). 19 June 1959

Orig.: 130.06/1946/23

Nirgad reports on his meeting with Roussel on the discussions between Israel and the Common Market. Roussel said that they are awaiting the results of Israel's discussions with the O.E.E.C. and thus negotiations will not begin before September. In his opinion, Israel will not be able to conduct negotiations on the basis of clause 238, i.e., toward association with the Common Market. It will only be able to do so on the basis of clause 11, paragraph 2, which empowers the Common Market Commission to conduct negotiations regarding customs duties with third party countries. In his opinion this is the maximum that Israel could hope for at this stage, taking into consideration that negotiations with Tunisia were not conducted on the basis of clause 238. Israel is not the only country wishing to come to an arrangement with the Common Market and the question arises as to

whether agreements that are signed will not be inconsistent with GATT regulations. Nirgad promised that Israel would provide all information requested regarding the negotiations.

Notes

1. This meeting took place on 12 January 1959. Rey said that the Community was willing to begin talks with Israel; see Rafael to the M.F.A., telegram 423, 16 June 1959, 130.06/1946/23.
2. See Nos. 389 and 390.
3. These took place in Geneva in May 1959, after which Israel was accepted as a provisional member of the organization.
4. Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, and Portugal, which on 20 July 1959 established the European Free Trade Area (EFTA).

389. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 26 June 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/17

Difficulties arose at a meeting of heads of mission of O.E.E.C. member states due to Germany's hesitancy. The German representative stated that he does not believe that his country will be a signatory to the agreement when it is be reached. Following this, the representatives of Belgium and the Netherlands announced that the condition upon which they will join the agreement is that the arrangement covered 80 percent of Israeli imports, and that they will have to consult their governments for new instructions. An examination of trade statistics reveals that even without Germany, 82 percent of Israeli imports will be accounted for. This is without the inclusion of transactions conducted within the framework of the reparations agreement, which is a case in its own right. In the time remaining until the next meeting in mid-July, action should be taken in two directions: 1. To approach Germany once more with a request that it change its attitude, 2. To call upon the other governments to instruct their representatives to support the continuation of the negotiations, despite the attitude of Germany.

Notes

1. In File 130.06/1946/6.

2. No. 383.
3. In File 130.06/1946/10.
4. See Shinnar to Fischer, 19 May 1959, 130.23/3084/25.
5. See Meroz to the M.F.A., 3 June 1959, 130.06/1946/17.
6. See Bartur to Israel missions abroad, Ministry Bulletin 774, 24 June 1959, ibid.
7. See note 6 above.
8. For a report on the talks, see No. 390.

390. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 12 July 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/17

Bartur reports that after receiving notification at the end of June that commencement of negotiations has been postponed, as well as information that a number of countries were reconsidering their stand, he had gone to Paris and London to study the situation and to try to counter Germany's negative influence, which could lead to the collapse of the entire multilateral operation. He held meetings with heads of delegation in Paris and with senior officials in the foreign and economic ministries in Bonn. Following are his conclusions:

The O.E.E.C. is in a difficult situation due to the split between the two blocs—the European Economic Community (the Common Market) and the European Free Trade Area which is now being established. The secretary-general of the O.E.E.C. is currently endeavouring to create a free trade area that would include all the O.E.E.C. states. A further problem being faced by the organization is the demand by the United States that it cease discriminating against the dollar bloc and its objection to allowing Spain to join under conditions that discriminate against the dollar bloc.

During the course of discussions in Bonn it became apparent that Germany's hesitance derives from two factors: a) apprehension that its full participation in the negotiations would lead to demands that the reparations payments be included in the arrangement. b) apprehension that such a precedent could lead to the removal of restrictions on the import of textile products from other non-European states, especially India and Japan. The Germans promised to instruct their representatives in Paris to state that in principle they support an agreement with Israel but would join it only in its final stages. Bartur supplied clarifications relating to these issues, and was promised that further discussions would be held with the purpose of changing Germany's reserved policy.[6]

Bartur again outlines the stands adopted by various states. Italy supports it formally, but is working behind the scenes to delay the negotiations because it is apprehensive lest the agreement be harmful to its own agricultural produce. The Benelux countries support it, the French are not particularly enthusiastic but would support it, Britain is in favour and is doing its best to expedite the negotiations, apparently out of a desire to turn the organization into a large free trade area. The Scandinavian countries are also supportive. Switzerland and Austria have not adopted a stand but will enter into negotiations when they begin.

The United States, on the other hand, is determined that once Israel associates with the organization, the global quotas that it sets will be open to all, and not only to O.E.E.C. member states. The U.S. representative to the organization, MacCarthy, is aware that such a demand places a hurdle before Israel and he is doing his utmost to have this directive changed.

No new date has yet been set for the discussion of Israel's request. In Bartur's opinion, the real barrier is the actual beginning of the negotiations, and once they are underway Israel will attain its goal, even though it will face difficulties and problems along the way.

Notes

1. In File 130.06/1946/17.
2. No. 389.
3. For a report on Bartur's meetings in Bonn, see Meroz to the M.F.A., 4 July 1959, 130.06/1946/17.
4. See Bartur to the M.F.A., telegram 78, 7 July 1959, ibid.
5. Spain was accepted as a member of the O.E.E.C. on 20 July 1959.
6. Shinnar disagreed with Bartur about Germany's position. According to him, the real reason for its hesitancy had to do with the fact that Israel had promised countries that agreed to participate in negotiations on the multilateral agreements to incorporate the reparations agreement into it, a promise that contradicted the content of the reparations agreement. (See Shinnar to Fischer, 3 August 1959, 130.23/3111/39.)
7. Dated 12 March 1959, in File 130.06/1946/10.
8. The letter, dated 18 July 1959, is attached to this document but has been omitted here.

391. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 14 August 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/11

Bartur supplies further information on the difficulties encountered in associating with the O.E.E.C. The delay in beginning the talks is due to Italian insistence that Israel submit a memorandum with its detailed proposals prior to beginning negotiations. They explained that this was demanded by experts in their economic ministries. Israel replied that it is not fair or reasonable to enter into detailed discussions prior to the beginning of talks. Israel will be willing to discuss details only when it sits down at the negotiating table. The submission of a memorandum in advance, it argued, would enable finding excuses for further delay. After further discussions in Rome, the Italians reiterated their request to receive a prior memorandum, but stated that should a date be set for the opening of discussions, they would agree to participate.[3]

The second reason for the delay is the issue of global quotas. The essence of this demand, which came from the Americans, is that import quotas for products not included in the liberalization of trade would be open not only to O.E.E.C. members but also to the dollar bloc states, i.e., the United States, Canada, Venezuela and Liberia. The Americans raised this demand during the O.E.E.C. negotiations regarding Spain, and are now reiterating it in regard to Israel. Israel's stand is that it prefers that the quotas be determined only for O.E.E.C. member states, but it is willing to consider some flexibility.

Israel is completing the memorandum referred to in his previous communication. It will be submitted when the date for the beginning of negotiations has been set. He requests that the envoys exploit every possible opportunity for discussions with the appropriate officials in the countries in which they are serving, and make it clear that Israel considers association with the O.E.E.C. a vital issue.

Notes

1. No. 390.
2. In File 130.06/1946/11.
3. On these meetings, see the cabled reports dated 5 and 12 August, ibid.
4. See the Israel embassy in Rome to the M.F.A., telegram 666, 12 August 1959, ibid.
5. See No. 393.
6. For the text of this letter, see the attachment to the letter from Bartur to the Israel embassy in Paris, 17 August 1959, in File 130.06/1946/12. Several corrections and changes were made to this letter; see No. 393.

392. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Brussels. 27 August 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/23

Bartur outlines the developing economic alliances in Europe: the Six, the Seven, and the O.E.E.C. It appears that two rival blocs are emerging and there is no way of knowing whether in the future a wider free trade area might be created that would include 13 states, or even the 18 member states of the O.E.E.C. From Israel's point of view, the larger framework is preferable because the possibility of association with it would be easier. The multilateral agreement that Israel is seeking is in this direction and a successful conclusion to the Israeli initiative will be of political, psychological, and practical importance.

Meanwhile, so long as the outcome is uncertain, Israel must make contact with both the Six and the Seven in order to examine their conditions for and reactions to possible of cooperation with Israel. As long as the Seven has not been formally established, exploratory talks at the diplomatic level will have to suffice. As regards the Common Market, unofficial discussions can be held with the Commission. This has been promised by Rey and other persons in the Common Market. To this end, he requests that the ambassador initiate such talks to centre around two issues: 1. An examination of the possibilities for a special customs arrangement on citrus fruit. 2. An examination of ways and means of cooperation between the Common Market and Israel. He believes that the end of September would be the most appropriate time for such a move.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 388.
2. In order to speed things up Bartur traveled to Brussels in early October; see no. 396.

393. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 28 August 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/12

Bartur is sending the missions the modified version of the letter to the chairman of the O.E.E.C. Council.[1] This version does not make mention of

the Italian opposition, for in the meantime the Italians have changed their stand and no longer object to the opening of negotiations. It has been learned that the change in attitude was the result of an interministerial meeting attended by representatives of a number of government offices, and the change resulted from pressure applied by the Italian Foreign Ministry. The latter argued that as the discussions were multilateral and not bilateral, Italy's opposition was tantamount to deliberate sabotage, and this should be avoided. All this notwithstanding, Israeli sources have learned that the Italians are working against the agreement in various capitals.

In the meantime a new difficulty has arisen. The impression has been created in European capitals that Israel wants to give the deliberations political significance, and not just economic and technical purport. This is also because it is believed that Israel is insisting that the deliberations be conducted by heads of delegation. Bartur reacts to this claim by stating that Israel has never raised such a demand, even though the chairman of the Council had undertaken that the discussions would be at the level of heads of delegation. The Dutch put forward a "compromise proposal": rather than acting on behalf of their delegations to the O.E.E.C., the negotiators would represent their governments in a direct way and thus the impression that Israel was "trying to take a roundabout way of joining the O.E.E.C." would be avoided. Bartur does not object to this arrangement–what is important is that the talks will be pragmatic.

Israel still lacks clear information on the American stand regarding the geographic incidence of the quotas. It is possible that the agreement will be restricted to the signatory countries, or that the import quotas would be increased so as to include the United States and Canada as well.

Notes

1. See No. 391.
2. In the file, but omitted here.
3. In the file, but omitted here.
4. See Sasson to the M.F.A., telegram 689, 26 August 1959, 130.06/1946/12.
5. This telegram is in File 130.09/2378/2.
6. See Meroz to Bartur, telegram 403, 24 August 1959, 130.09/2354/8.

394. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 4 September 1959

Memorandum: 130.06/1946/12

Bartur presents the minister with a methodical and detailed review of the processes of unification in Europe and the steps being taken by Israel to associate with these unions. His conclusion is that despite all the difficulties, which are mainly political, from the economic standpoint Israel belongs to the European bloc, and such association is inevitable.

395. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 11 October 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/13

Bartur sends material for the information of the missions relating to the negotiations conducted on 23 September in Paris with the representatives of a number of O.E.E.C. member states.[1] At the conclusion of the deliberations, a working group was set up to collect the facts on the case. It will submit its conclusions by 19 October, and they will probably serve as a draft agreement. The governments will then consider the material and on the basis of this draft will have to decide whether to enter into formal negotiations.

Bartur stresses that despite the informal nature of the discussions, Israel had succeeded in lending them the character of preliminary negotiations and in drawing up a draft agreement most of whose points were accepted by all. There are a number of difficulties and hesitations to be overcome arising out of apprehension concerning the political implications of such an agreement, the unclear situation of the European economic organizations at the present time, competition between the Six and the Seven, and concern that agreements within the framework of the O.E.E.C. could constitute discrimination against non-member states and might be contrary to the principles of GATT. Nevertheless, he is convinced that the agreement is essential as a first step in overcoming Israel's economic and political isolation and an opening to more comprehensive arrangements with European countries within the framework of their developing economic unions.

Bartur requests that close contacts be maintained with the relevant persons and ministries in the various countries to guarantee rapid progress.

Notes

1. In File 130.09/1946/13 but not printed here.
2. See Bartur to Salmon, 15 October 1959, 130.06/1946/14; Bartur to Gilat, 16 October 1959, 130.06/1946/14.
3. See No. 396.

396. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 18 October 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/24

Bartur reports on the meetings that he and the ambassador in Brussels held with the heads of the Commission of the European Economic Community. They met with Hallstein, president of the Commission, and with Rey, head of its foreign affairs section, with Seeliger, the director-general, and with Mansholt, who is in charge of the Commission's agricultural affairs section.[1]

The Israeli representatives explained the difficulties Israel would face with the imminent entry of Turkey and Greece into the Market. Israel would be faced with customs duties that would constantly increase and adversely affect Israel's exports. The solution lies in partial association, under clause 238 of the Common Market's convention, which authorises the Community to enter into limited agreements with third-party states. The reply of the representatives of the Market was that discussions could be conducted regarding Israel's partial association with the Common Market.

During the course of the discussions, the Israelis proposed opening negotiations regarding a select number of Israeli export products as quid pro quo for a number of Common Market products, i.e., to create a limited common customs union for certain items. They were told that this seemed to be a possible basis for negotiation and that the proposal would be discussed in detail. The Commission members stressed the friendship of the Common Market states for Israel. Bartur and the Ambassador were impressed by their sincerity.

Bartur concludes that Israel must take a decision in principle regarding partial association with the Market. A concrete proposal must be drawn up,

perhaps along the lines suggested above, which would serve as a basis for negotiations with the Commission.

Note

1. Records of the meetings with Rey and Seeliger have been found (in File 130.06/1946/24).

397. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions in Western Europe. 13 November 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/14

Bartur reports that the O.E.E.C. working group has completed its task regarding Israel's association with the organisation. Its report was received on 4 November. It is objective and free of factual errors, but the manner in which the statistical data were processed is questionable. It can be assumed that the representatives of the member states added their own comments and suggestions when they forwarded the report to their governments, and this information should be ascertained wherever possible.

During the following week the missions will receive the text of the letter to be submitted to all the governments who had previously expressed their willingness to join in a multilateral agreement. In this letter, Israel will request the governments to signify their willingness to enter into negotiations, and January 1960 would be proposed as a suitable date. He adds that interest is currently being expressed in Israel's proposals and this opportune moment should be exploited. He requests reactions to the report and information on steps the delegations propose to take in the near future.

Notes

1. In File 130.09/2378/2.
2. The enclosures have not been found.
3. In File 93.04/769/1.
4. No. 395.
5. See No. 398.
6. See No. 383.

398. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 20 November 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/15

Bartur sends the report of the working group and the text of the letter to be submitted, at the appropriate level, to the governments of the countries to which they are accredited.[2] A copy of this letter will also be submitted to representatives of the appropriate countries in Israel. He requests comments and suggested amendments. The proposed date for the beginning of negotiations is the second half of January 1960. When submitting the letter, it should be stressed that Israel would appreciate a reply as soon as possible.[5]

Notes

1. No. 397.
2. These documents are in the file but have been omitted here.
3. No. 383.
4. See No. 389 and notes there.
5. The negotiations with the countries of the O.E.E.C. did not begin in January 1960; see No. 400. A summary of the responses to the Israeli Note follows:

   (1) Austria: The director of the economic division of the Foreign Ministry promised that Austria would participate in the negotiations; see the Israel ambassador in Vienna to the M.F.A., telegram 1, 29 November 1959, 130.09/2305/9. (2) The Netherlands expressed fear that the end of the year period would interfere with the rapid conclusion of the consultations; see Cidor to Bartur, telegram 610, 30 November 1959, 130.09/1946/15. (3) Germany: They promised to consider the possibility of full German participation in the talks and to explain to the other participants that Germany viewed the negotiations with understanding and sympathy and might sign an agreement when reached; see Meroz to Bartur, telegram 609, 30 November 1959; 130.06/1946/15. (4) Italy: Support in principle had been promised–see the Israel embassy in Rome to the M.F.A., telegram 959, 1 December 1959, 130.09/2358/6. (5) Switzerland responded that it would take no initiative but would participate if the "big" countries did so; see Linton to Bartur, telegram 321, 3 December 1959, 130.09/2302/3. (6) Great Britain: An answer had been promised "before Christmas" (see Gilat to Bartur, telegram 636, 3 December 1959, 130.09/2322/7). But no such response has been found and evidently none was provided. (7) Norway: They were considering whether they should provide an interim response or wait for the reaction of the countries that would make the real decision–see Livne to the Economic Division of the M.F.A., 28 December 1959, 130.06/1946/16. (8) Belgium: In a Note (of uncertain date) they said they could not take a position and would have to bring the matter before the institutions of the Benelux and of the Common Market; see Nirgad to the Economic Division, 14

December 1959, 130.06/1946/16. (9) Sweden: in a Note dated 5 December it provided a noncommittal interim answer; see Aroch to Bartur, 9 December 1959, 130.09/2362/6. (10) France provided an evasive answer; see the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Paris, 29 December 1959, 130.09/1946/16.

399. Memorandum by the Economic Division. 18 December 1959

Copy: 130.23/3277/18

The memorandum[1] surveys the processes of economic union that the countries of Western Europe are undergoing. As a result of mutual preferential treatment that will be introduced within the frameworks being created, all other countries will be adversely affected. The multilateral agreement that Israel is striving to attain will solve only the matter of quotas, while the issue of customs duties will be solved only through association with one of the two blocs being constituted. The Six, the older of the two blocs, has evinced more readiness, from the organizational point of view, for association of this type. The talks being conducted with Turkey and Greece, whose problems are similar to those of Israel, will facilitate common understanding. It is thus suggested that the Six be approached with the proposal for mutual cancellation of customs duties. A delay in facilitation should be requested, similar to the arrangement with the overseas territories connected to the Six or with Turkey and Greece. It may well be that certain Israeli industries will suffer, but the expected benefit would outweigh the danger Israel would have to face should it not begin the process of association.

Note

1. This memorandum was prepared advance of consultations at the M.F.A.. Only the abstract and summary have been printed here.

400. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to A. Harman and A. Salmon (Washington). 20 December 1959

Copy: 130.06/1946/16

Bartur attaches Sasson's cable from Rome which is self-explanatory.[1] The cable confirms forceful Arab activity to counteract Israel's efforts to associate with the economic unions in Europe. They have understood the political implications of Israel's initiative and acted accordingly. To counteract Egypt's argument against Israel's association with the O.E.E.C., in discussions in European capitals it should be stressed that Israel's request is not to join the organisation itself but rather to associate with countries with which it already has commercial agreements. It should be further be pointed out that some of these countries signed their commercial agreements with Israel despite Arab objections. The Arabs also objected against Israel's association with GATT, yet Egypt and Lebanon continue to send observers to GATT, Tunisia has been accepted for membership on a temporary basis, and Libya is about to apply. His letter is addressed to the embassy in Washington (with copies to other missions) because the Arab initiative should be clarified with the State Department. American assistance to Israel's efforts to join the European economic unions will improve Israel's economic and political situation and will undermine the Arab enmity that is implemented mainly in the economic sphere.

In the meantime clarifications are continuing regarding Israel's request for a partial arrangement with the Six, but here, too, political obstacles can be expected.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 336. In this telegram Sasson reported, inter alia, that during the visit to Rome by the foreign minister of the United Arab Republic, Mahmud Fawzi, his country's opposition to any multilateral ties between Israel and European countries was mentioned.
2. On 15 January 1960 Bartur wrote to the Israel missions (in File 93.04/769/10) that since his letter of 20 December 1959 (No. 400) Israel had refrained from any further attention to the matter of joining the O.E.E.C. because the M.F.A. wanted to wait for the results of the talks being conducted by Dillon, the American undersecretary of state for economic affairs, with representatives of the European economic organizations in Paris in January 1960. Nevertheless, Israeli representatives were asked to renew their efforts and to propose February as a date for the talks, if January was not suitable. The Israeli initiative for an agreement with the O.E.E.C. expired when the European countries reached the conclusion that the organization

had reached the end of its usefulness and should be replaced by another body, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (O.E.C.D.), comprising the 18 members of the O.E.E.C., plus the United States and Canada. On 20 March 1960 Bartur sent Eytan a memorandum intended for the heads of the new organization, presenting Israel's interest in joining it; see Vol. 14, No. 316.

401. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 October 1958

Coded Tel. 901; Inc.: 130.09/2358/4

Sasson states that as Pope John XXIII[1] takes up his office it is to be hoped that there will be a change for the better in the attitude of the Vatican to Israel. During the past few years, staff members of the embassy in Rome and the consulate in Milan have visited him and given him a comprehensive survey of the developments and problems Israel is facing. His response was perceptive and encouraging. He will probably replace Tardini, the secretary of state at the Vatican, whose attitude is unfavourable, with someone more positive.[2] Sasson suggests that the president of Israel send a cable to the Pope congratulating him on his appointment and that Israel should announce its desire to attend officially the investiture ceremony of the new Pope.[3]

Notes

1. Upon his election, Angelo Cardinal Roncalli assumed the name John XXIII.
2. In October 1958, however, Pope John named Tardini permanent secretary of state; until then he had held the post only in an acting capacity.
3. The congratulatory telegram from President Ben-Zvi to the Pope (undated) is in File 130.23/3102/19, as are the reply from the Vatican secretary of state, dated 6 November, and a telegram from Golda Meir to the Vatican secretary of state (30 October) about Israel's interest in being represented at the Pope's coronation.

402. Pope John XXIII (Rome) to President Ben-Zvi.[1] 29 October 1958

Official Hebrew translation: 130.23/3102/20

Pope John XXIII announces his accession to the office of Pope. He promises that, like his predecessor, Pius XII, his attitude toward the president and his people will be one of good will and loving-kindness. He also expresses his belief that the Catholic Church will be able to fulfill its task in Israel in such a manner that would contribute to the success of the people of Israel.[2]

Notes

1. This Note was transmitted to the Israel ambassador in Rome by the papal nuncio in Italy, who requested that the ambassador forward it to the president of Israel. The Latin original is in File 105/48/1784.
2. In his reply, dated 20 November, President Ben-Zvi wrote that the situation of the Catholic Church in Israel was solid and its rights protected. The issue of the establishment of diplomatic relations was not brought up (ibid.).

403. E. Sasson (Rome) to the West European Division. 5 November 1958

Coded Tel. 934; Inc.: 130.09/2358/4

Sasson reports that the heads of delegation who attended the investiture ceremony of the Pope had a short audience with him. Sasson was the first non-Christian head of delegation to approach Pope John XXIII. During the course of the two-minute conversation, the Pope said that he had read much about Israel, and he wished Israel success in attaining the peace so badly needed. In reply to Sasson's comment that Israel would appreciate his assistance in this matter, he stated that the church would do all within its power to do so. In reply to a further comment by Sasson that recognition by the Vatican and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel could constitute a contribution of the utmost importance to the creation of stability and peace in the area, the Pope stated that he would willingly examine this possibility. The Pope also recalled his action in saving Jews during the Holocaust and expressed the hope that the Jewish people would

not suffer further catastrophes and would be enabled to live a free and peaceful life.[1]

Note

1. Eytan replied that Sasson had done well to raise the topic of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Vatican at the meeting and that Fischer would write him as to Israel's thoughts and intentions on this matter. (See Eytan to Sasson, 7 November 1958, 130.23/3102/19.) Fischer wrote to Sasson that "in light of the new Pope's favourable attitude in principle toward us, the fact remains that he has aged greatly. . . . This fact greatly reduces the value of any conversation between the Pope . . . and any other layman. . . . Only what he says to a cardinal of the Curia has real value, because the cardinals of the Curia have the right to rely on what the Pope says. . . . This situation of course greatly increases the potential value of mediation by Cardinal Tisserant." (See Fischer to Sasson, 16 November 1958, 130.23/3102/20.) Fischer attached to his letter a note to Cardinal Tisserant requesting an audience. In practice he was hoping that Tisserant could get him an audience with the Pope, as indeed occurred; see No. 405.

404. E. Sasson (Rome) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 21 November 1958

Coded Tel. 997; Inc.: 130.09/2358/4

Sasson has visited Cardinal Tisserant.[1] The Cardinal read Fischer's letter[2] in his presence and stated that he would do his utmost to be of assistance to Israel, but the appointment of Tardini as secretary of state at the Vatican would make this difficult for in the past he had led the opposition to the recognition of Israel and succeeded in preventing it. He is certain that Tardini will continue his efforts in this direction. However, the new Pope is more open to the problem of establishing relations with Israel. In his first meeting with the new Pope, Tisserant raised the subject on his own initiative and not only did he receive a positive reaction, but he also heard encouraging statements. He will raise the matter once again at his next audience with the Pope. He considers his attempts to establish relations with Israel as a divine mission. At the end of the meeting, the situation of progeny of mixed marriages in Israel was raised. Reports of the situation of these children reaching Rome have caused concern at the Vatican and negative reactions especially in Latin American countries. As for the idea of a

meeting between Fischer and the Pope, he proposed that the matter be left in abeyance for the time being to enable him to prepare the ground.

Notes

1. Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, the dean of the College of Cardinals. Until November 1959 he was the secretary of the Congregation of the Eastern Churches; from that date he served as the Vatican archivist and librarian.
2. See No. 403 and n. 1 there.

405. M. Fischer (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 25 February 1959

Stenciled circular: 130.23/3102/20

Fischer reviews the developments concerning relations between Israel and the Vatican that led to his audience with the Pope. The accession to the papacy of John XXIII led to an exchange of correspondence between Israel and the Vatican[1] and the participation of an official delegation at the investiture ceremony of the new pontiff. These events constituted de facto recognition of the State of Israel by the Vatican and have encouraged Israel to renew its attempts to put an end to the situation of complete absence of relations that has existed up to now.

John XXIII received Fischer in audience on 9 February.[3] The meeting strengthened Fischer's feeling from the time of their acquaintance in Paris that the Pope has a sincerely friendly attitude toward the Jewish people and tends towards establishing normal relations with Israel. Based on the suggestion of some friends prior to the meeting, Fischer requested that the Pope create an apostolic vicariate in Israel and put an end to the situation that has existed since 1948, whereby the church has avoided recognition of the state, and conducted its affairs through persons accredited to Palestine, Transjordan and Cyprus. The Pope explained that he cannot take a decision on his own in this matter, but that he will examine the proposal positively.

Following the audience with the Pope, Fischer met with Tardini, secretary of state at the Vatican. Tardini listed a number of complaints against Israel, among which was the situation of children of Jews married to Catholics. He claimed that pressure was brought to bear on these children to convert. He also reiterated the Vatican's stand regarding the internationalization of Jerusalem. However, after that, to Fischer's surprise he

announced that his proposal to establish an apostolic vicariate in Israel has been accepted. He stressed that the establishment of the vicariate should not be interpreted as the creation of diplomatic relations, for in his opinion the time is not ripe nor is the need felt for such relations. In any event, Fischer will always be welcome at the secretary of state's office at the Vatican. He stressed that since the accession of the new Pope there has been a radical change in attitude toward Israel, as the invitation to the investiture and exchange of correspondence have proved.

Fischer concludes that the change in attitude of the Vatican could be explained by the personality of the new Pope, and by disappointment at the failure of the past fifteen years of attempts by the Church to penetrate the Muslim world, as well as the attitude to the Church's institutions in Muslim countries. The news of this change was received with satisfaction by the ministries of foreign affairs of France and Italy, and this will assist in Israel's relations with Catholic countries such as Ireland and the Latin American states.

Notes

1. See No. 402.
2. On this affair, see the report of the mission to the Vatican, 15 January-9 February 1957, in File 130.23/3102/18.
3. A full report on the meeting, dated 10 February 1959, is in File 130.23/3102/20.
4. This committee was established in December 1958 in Jerusalem. Its a full name was the Israeli Committee for the Promotion of Understanding between the Religions of the World.

406. M. Fischer [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and J. Tsur. 5 November 1959

Copy: 130.23/3102/20

Fischer reports on meetings he has held in Italy concerning Israel-Vatican relations. He held these meetings in the knowledge that relations between these two entities requires constant fostering. He also wished to counter the negative attitudes he encountered in April-May 1959, when he was not even received by a senior official and was treated impolitely.[5] On this occasion, he was received by Monsignor Samoré and the conversations were relaxed. Among other matters, they discussed the appointment of an apostolic vicar

in Israel and the Israeli presence at the Pope's investiture. Samoré did not deny Fischer's claim that these events constituted de facto recognition by the Vatican, but pointed out that the presence of an Israeli representative at the ceremony was the result of a request by Israel. Fischer pointed out that the apostolic delegate has not visited a representative of the Government of Israel but has only met with the governor of West Jerusalem. Samoré replied that a meeting with a civilian official of the Israel government was not essential and cited as an example, the custom in South Africa where the apostolic delegate only visits the church authorities. The meeting ended with Samoré requesting that Fischer reduce the frequency of his visits to Rome because the Arabs are following these visits with alarm. Fischer also held meetings with church dignitaries and friends.

Notes

1. Father Alfredo Polidori, head of the Custodia de Terra Sancta, a body established in 1217 as an extension of the Franciscan Order. Its mission was to protect the Christian holy places that had fallen under Muslim control after the defeat of the Crusaders and end of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1291.
2. Joseph Harfouche, the Lebanese ambassador at the Vatican.
3. Paul Pierre Meouchi, the Maronite patriarch of Lebanon.
4. Silvio Oddi, the apostolic delegate in the United Arab Republic.
5. No report on the visit, described later in this document as "unfortunate", has been found. From a later document (Fischer to Sasson, telegram 367, 30 March 1960, in File 130.09/2359/1), it seems that Fischer was not able to meet with Samoré, Tardini's deputy. He was received instead by Felice, who read to him a memorandum that castigated Israel in connection with the problem of Jerusalem and its attitude toward mixed families. Fischer refused to accept the memorandum.
6. See No. 405.
7. See ibid.
8. These memoranda, dated 19 and 20 April 1959, are in File 130.23/3102/27.
9. Alberto Gori, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem. On the structure of the Catholic hierarchy in Israel at that period, see a memorandum by the Political Research Division of the M.F.A., dated 1 November 1959, in File 130.23/3102/27.
10. The Vatican office that dealt with Churches in the Middle East.
11. Antonio Vergani, patriarchal vicar (until 1956, the representative of the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem in northern Israel).
12. On the storm over Chiappero's remarks to journalists when he arrived in Israel, see No. 407.
13. In fact it was Israel that had asked to be invited; see No. 401, n. 3.
14. This document has not been found.

407. E. Sasson (Rome) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 22 December 1959

Coded Tel. 36; Inc.: 130.09/2358/6

Sasson expresses his annoyance at Fischer's reaction to the statement of Vicar Chiappero that his arrival in Israel heralded the establishment of relations with the Vatican.[1] Fischer, who feared a negative reaction from Rome, immediately published a rebuttal in the newspapers. Sasson pointed out that the reaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs constituted unwarranted alarm. This presented Chiappero soon after his arrival in Israel as lacking credibility and has thus prevented him from acting in the manner he has chosen. In his opinion a mistake was made in that no one received him when he arrived in Haifa and persuaded him then not to make any statement. In this manner tension and alarm would have been avoided and Chiappero would have been saved from aggravation.[2]

Notes

1. In these telegrams, dated 15 and 16 December (all of them in File 130.09/2358/5), Fischer reported on Chiappero's statement upon his arrival in Israel that his appointment was a harbinger of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel and the response published in the name of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Israeli press, according to which there was no connection between Chiappero's appointment and diplomatic relations between Israel and the Vatican.
2. In the wake of this telegram, Fischer and Sasson exchanged letters. Fischer wrote that he had published his clarification pursuant to the recommendation of "loyal friends among the Catholic clergy in Israel". Sasson replied that the clarification published in the Israeli press reflected fear and panic that would not reinforce Israel's standing in the Vatican. In his opinion the Church would recognize Israel only when its own interests required it to do so. Hence it was necessary to learn what these interests might be and exploit them in an "orderly and planned" fashion. (The letters, dated 25 and 28 December, are in File 130.23/3102/20.)

408. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Rome. 6 January 1958

Coded Tel. 497; Outg.: 130.09/2358/2

The minister of foreign affairs instructs Sasson to meet with the prime minister of Turkey, Menderes, before the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Baghdad Pact.[1] The purpose of the meeting is twofold: to improve relations between Israel and Turkey and to discuss Israel's attitude to the Baghdad Pact. Regarding bilateral relations, the common interest of the two countries to prevent Soviet domination of the Middle East should be stressed. Both countries are interested that each of them be reinforced and this requires close political contact between them. The situation whereby neither country is represented at least at the ministerial level is not satisfactory and thus the connection should be strengthened through special meetings and greater acceptance of the Israeli envoy in Ankara.[6] A meeting between the two chiefs of general staff should also be proposed.

As regards the Baghdad Pact, he should explain to Menderes that stressing the anti-Israeli aspect of the pact would not help it achieve its main aim—the security of the Middle East. The anti-Israel clauses of the pact[7] have not attracted any one of the Arab states to join it. If the policy of the pact were change in Israel's favour, Israel would also reexamine its attitude towards it. Golda Meir points out that it is doubtful whether Dulles will be able to obtain approval from the Congress for an additional expansion of security guarantees on the part of the United States toward the pact without the question of guarantees for Israel being raised. This constitutes a bargaining point on Israel's part and it would not forfeit it without satisfactory return. There is also the problem of France's attitude to the pact, which sees it as an American-British instrument for control of the Middle East.

Notes

1. The fourth session of the Council of Ministers of the Baghdad Pact was held in Ankara on 27-30 January. Also present were the prime ministers of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan.
2. Sasson met with Menderes in Paris in December 1957 during the gathering of the heads of government of NATO, held there on 16-19 December 1957. Following their talk Menderes amended for the better several sections in his speech to the assembled leaders dealing with Israel. (See Sasson to Meir, telegram 622, 16 December 1957, 130.15/3752/14.)
3. On 10 and 11 December 1957, representatives of the Muslim members of the

Baghdad Pact (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan) met in Ankara. The joint communiqué published after the session included the following clause: ". . . that one of the main sources of unrest in the Middle East is the Palestine problem, which has not so far been settled in accordance with the decisions of the U.N. and with justice and equity."

4. Secretary of State Dulles participated as an observer in meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Baghdad Pact in Ankara in January 1958.
5. On the issue of Israeli plantings in the area between the lines near Government House in Jerusalem, see No. 171, n. 3.
6. Moshe Alon, chargé d'affaires of Israel in Ankara, 1956-1960.
7. Attached to the text of the agreement signed by Turkey and Iraq on 24 February 1955 (which turned into the Baghdad Pact after other countries added their signatures) was an exchange of the letters between Menderes and Nuri al-Said, according to which the two countries committed themselves to cooperate on behalf of the implementation of United Nations resolutions concerning Palestine.
8. See No. 409.
9. Cevat Açikalin, the Turkish ambassador to Italy.

409. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 8 January 1958

Copy: 130.15/3752/14

Sasson sends the main points of his letter to the prime minister of Turkey.[1] He will deliver the letter to the Turkish ambassador in Rome. Because of the possibility of Menderes' bringing it to the attention of the Americans, he has written it in a manner that could not be misinterpreted.

Summary of Sasson's letter to Menderes:

Following the report on their meeting in Paris,[3] he was instructed by the Government of Israel to expand contacts with the aim of increased cooperation between the two countries. The Government of Israel advocates the strengthening of ties in order to reinforce the joint stand against the imminent danger to the Middle East arising out of the cold war. The two governments should develop joint proposals for cooperation and bring them to the knowledge of the United States and Western countries. Exchange of information in the political and military arenas should be implemented so that in times of emergency forces can be drawn up to face any attempt to remove them from the free world. Israel like Turkey objects to any change in the status quo in the Middle East and it will do all in its power to maintain the independence of Jordan and Lebanon, so that they do not share the

same fate as Egypt and Syria. Israel wishes to stress that its objection to the Baghdad Pact is not opposition to the pact itself but to those clauses in the annex to the pact that were aimed specifically against Israel.[4] A change in these clauses could bring about a change in Israel's attitude to the pact. He hopes that at the next session of the pact members, Turkey will do its utmost to prevent the Israeli issue from being raised. He is requesting a meeting in Istanbul as soon as possible before the session of the Baghdad Pact, on the understanding that the meeting will be kept secret.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 408.
2. Ambassador Açikalin promised to forward the letter to its intended destination, and even to add a recommendation to Menderes to see Sasson soon (see Sasson to Meir, telegram 9, 9 January 1958, 130.09/2358/3).
3. See No. 408 and n. 2 there.
4. Ibid., n. 7.
5. The full text of the Note, in French, is in File 130.15/3752/14. No written reply to this Note has been found.

410. Z. Doriel (Teheran) to I. Koslov (Jerusalem). 12 February 1958

Copy: 93.08/412/9

Doriel informs Koslov about the situation regarding the supply of oil from Iran. Supply is being carried out in a satisfactory manner. Relations with the National Iranian Oil Company are excellent. There is an obvious improvement in Israel-Iran relations in general. True, a number of reports have appeared in the press detailing Arab claims without any commentary or with routine denials. Within the framework of the controversy with the Arab states over Bahrain,[2] many of the newspapers have stated that the Arabs have not compensated Iran for its low profile relations with Israel. Iran has made great sacrifices, but the Arabs are following an anti-Iran line. The dominant theme of the controversy is the threat to renew relations with Israel if the Arabs do not change their attitude regarding the Bahrain issue. The concern he had had following the Shah's visit to Lebanon has abated. The Lebanese did raise the issue, but the Shah gave them the usual replies and the Lebanese dropped the matter. Doriel hopes that if Israel maintains its steadfast stand, it will succeed, because of the general feeling in Iran and

with the help of local supporters, in overcoming all the dangers and much oil will flow through the pipeline before the enemies succeed in blocking it.

Notes

1. In this survey Doriel reported that the representatives of Arab countries in Iran were raising the subject of the oil sales to Israel with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Iranians were replying that they had no information about such transactions (13 November 1957, 130.15/3748/8).
2. A group of islands in the Persian Gulf, under Persian sovereignty 1602-1782 and under British protection since 1861. Iran claimed sovereignty over Bahrain, but these claims were rejected by Britain and Arab countries. In November 1957 the Iranian Majlis (parliament) passed legislation defining Bahrain as the fourteenth province of the country.
3. On 6 April 1957, after the Egyptian blockade of the Straits of Tiran had been lifted, the American tanker *Kern Hills* reached Eilat with a cargo of 16,700 tons of crude oil from Iran. After Arab representatives lodged protests in Iran, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on 16 April that the Iranian government did not allow the national oil company to export petroleum to Israel. The captain of the tanker that arrived in Eilat was accused of fraud, having claimed that his destination was a port in Africa.
4. Iran closed its mission in Israel in July 1951, allegedly because of budgetary cutbacks, and announced that the Iranian legation in Jordan would handle Iranian interests in Israel. See Vol. 6, No. 268 and n. 3 there.
5. The reference is to the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference held in Cairo in December 1957-January 1958.
6. See No. 408.

411. Meeting: P. Sapir–Iranian Minister of Commerce Neyssari (Teheran, 14 February 1958, document dated 15 February 1958)

Copy: 93.08/412/9

During a stopover in Teheran on his flight to the Far East, Israel's minister of commerce and industry met with the minister of commerce of Iran, Neyssari. Sapir began by stating that the extent of trade between the two countries–approximately $140,000–is disappointing especially in view of the good relations between the countries and the fact that their economies complemented each other. Israel is prepared to examine the possibility of the purchase of materials and food products in Iran and is prepared to take the

first step, even without a reciprocal arrangement. It would be helpful if Iran were to examine which Israeli products would be of interest.

The Iranian minister asked if Israel's trade was free or controlled. He explained that it was Iranian policy to carry out free trading and thus it would not renew the clearing agreements that were about to expire. Minister Sapir and M. Tsur, who also participated in the meeting, replied.

Sapir then raised the proposal of an oil pipeline between Eilat and the Mediterranean.[2] He pointed out that the laying of a broad gauge pipeline would free Iran from the danger of being cut off from European markets. Israel has experience in this and a narrow gauge pipeline is functioning successfully. Israel would appreciate it if Iran would participate in this project. The Iranian minister replied that the ideas raised are most interesting. He will review all the matters that were discussed and meet again with Doriel.[3]

Doriel, reporting, gives his conclusions from the meeting: This was the first meeting between an Israeli minister and an Iranian minister, and it is important that it was held with the permission of the Shah. The minister was only recently appointed and is not yet fully conversant with the issues. His status and that of his ministry are not of the greatest importance. As for the pipeline, a relevant reaction should not be expected as this is not in his area of competence, but in that of the National Iranian Oil Company, the parliament, and the Shah, and is clearly a political issue. Thus raising the matter of the pipeline is premature.

Notes

1. The Minister of Commerce and Industry, Pinhas Sapir, stopped over in Teheran on his way to the Far East.
2. In November 1956, after the blockade of Eilat had been lifted, Israel began laying a pipeline to transport oil purchased in the Persian Gulf from Eilat to the refineries in Haifa. The pipeline, with a diameter of eight inches, began operation in April 1957; see No. 21, n. 2.
3. The meeting between Doriel and the Iranian minister of commerce took place on 16 February, after the meeting with Sapir. The minister said that he had to prepare a report for his superiors and asked Doriel for various details. (See a report on the conversation prepared by Doriel, 17 February 1958, 93.08/412/9.)

412. M. Alon (Ankara) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 9 March 1958

Copy: 130.15/3750/3

Alon was summoned to a meeting with Foreign Minister Zorlu. The discussion was friendly and cordial, lasting about one hour. Zorlu stated that in Turkey there is a sincere feeling of friendship towards Israel and he hopes that these relations will be strengthened further. These relations do not preclude Turkish relations with the Arab states. The aim is to strengthen contact between the countries of the region with the West and to prevent Communist penetration into the region. Thus Israel should not exaggerate the importance of the exchange of correspondence between Prime Minister Menderes and Nuri al-Said annexed to the Turkey-Iraq agreement.[1] In Zorlu's opinion, Israel is mistaken in its stand against the Baghdad Pact.[2] Its objection prevents the United States joining the pact and bolstering it up. The Baghdad Pact has split the Arab world and thus is serving Israel's interests, is preventing Nasser's domination, and guarantees the loyalty to the West of a number of Arab states.

Alon replied with the arguments he had brought before Küneralp[4] and detailed the course of events since the signing of the pact, and the attacks against Israel on many occasions. He stressed that Israel does not have any influence on whether or not the United States joins the pact. Zorlu disagreed and pointed out that in discussions that he and Menderes held with Dulles in Paris they gained the impression that the refusal of the United States to join the pact is due to its fear of objection on the part of Israel.

They also discussed the unification process taking place in the Arab world. Turkey is satisfied with the federation of kings,[5] and supported it because it constitutes a counter force to Nasser. On the other hand, the establishment of the U.A.R. constitutes a hazard, especially because of the presence of the Egyptian army, equipped and trained by the Soviets, on the borders of Turkey and Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 408 and n. 7 there.
2. At the same meeting, held on 1 November 1955, Zorlu explained at length the benefits to Israel of the Baghdad pact, which could provide leverage toward an Arab-Israeli settlement. He noted that he had suggested to Dulles and Macmillan that the United States join the alliance and that Israel be given guarantees against aggression. (See Fischer to the M.F.A., 1 November 1955, 130.09/2289/13.)
3. See No. 408 and n. 2 there.
4. In January, Alon was summoned to Küneralp, the deputy secretary-general of the

Foreign Ministry for political affairs, and asked about the Israeli position on the Baghdad Pact, and particularly about the formal adherence of United States to the alliance. Alon answered, in part, that if the anti-Israel element of the pact were eliminated there would be room to reconsider the Israeli position. (See the telegram from Alon to the M.F.A., 23 January 1958, 130.09/2290/2.)

5. The federation between Jordan and Iraq, established in February 1958, which also involved a merger of the governments of the two countries. The federation came to an abrupt end with the military coup in Iraq in July of that year.
6. See No. 408 and n. 3 there.
7. In the debate on the Foreign Ministry budget by the Turkish parliament in February 1958, Zorlu praised Nuri al-Said and supported the Iraqi position on Arab nationalism. He mentioned the friendly relations with Egypt and emphasized that the Egyptian-Syrian union had come at the initiative of Syrian politicians who wanted to save their country from Communism. (See Alon to the M.F.A., telegram 62, 27 February 1958, 130.09/2290/2.)

413. Z. Doriel (Teheran) to the Asian and African Division. 13 March 1958

Copy: 130.15/3747/29

Doriel refers to Israel's mission in Iran and that of Iran in Israel. During the course of a conversation with the Swiss ambassador to Iran he was surprised to learn that Switzerland has undertaken to represent Iran's interests in Israel. If this is true, in his opinion Israel is making a serious tactical mistake, and he wishes to warn against it. From the legal and demonstrative point of view, the transference to a neutral state of the protection of interests is a step taken only when a recognized or non-recognized status of war exists and there are important interests of citizens to be protected. Such a situation does not exist between Israel and Iran and basing relations on such an arrangement distorts the nature of existing relations between the two countries. There is also the fear of establishing a dangerous precedent, such as regarding the relations between Israel and Turkey.

On the other hand, such a situation is very convenient for Iran because it can thus protect the numerous Iranian citizens in Israel and can silence the opposition which is demanding the establishment of normal relations with Israel.

He believes, therefore, that this unsatisfactory arrangement should be annulled in order not to allow the Iranians to deceive Iranian public opinion, to give a fake impression of "gradual steps" toward normalization, and to perpetuate the existing situation for an indefinite period of time.[7]

Notes

1. See No. 408 and n. 3 there.
2. Report No. 104 has not been found; in report No. 105 (in File 130.15/2565/24), Doriel reported on a conversation with the Iranian chief of protocol, who proposed that Iran and Israel be represented in each other's country by a third country. Doriel, who took away the impression that the idea was that of Foreign Minister Ardalan, replied in the negative and said that such arrangement was customary only between countries in a state of war.
3. In an exchange of notes between Switzerland and Israel in February 1958, it was agreed that Switzerland would represent Iranian interests in Israel. Because of "an unfortunate mishap" the Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to notify Doriel of this (see M.F.A. to Doriel, 23 March 1958, 130.15/3747/29).
4. See No. 411.
5. The reference is evidently to Doriel's letter of 18 April 1956, in which he sketched general lines for Israeli activity in Iran (in File 130.15/2565/24).
6. Sharett stopped over in Iran in September 1956 on his way to the Far East. Doriel prepared for him a summary of Israeli activity in Iran. Doriel wanted to consult with Sharett about the activity to establish diplomatic relations with Iran but did not receive a clear answer. (See the summary dated 18 September 1956, Doriel to the M.F.A., 25 September 1956, ibid.)
7. These documents have not been located, except for report 105; see n. 2 above. The ministry replied that it disagreed with Doriel. There could be no confidence that in the coming years Iran would agree to any forward movement with regard to diplomatic representation, so the arrangement did contain an element of progress. Israel too was giving consideration to asking a foreign country to represent it in Teheran. (See M.F.A. to Doriel, 23 March 1958, 130.15/3747/29.) In fact, Israel did ask the Netherlands to represent its interests in Iran, but the latter declined on the grounds that the state of relations between Israel and Iran did not justify such a step (see Cidor to the M.F.A., 25 May 1958, ibid.).

414. Israel Ambassador in Washington to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 25 March 1958

Copy: 130.23/3125/5

Eban refers to the meeting between the chargé Alon and the Turkish minister of foreign affairs, Zorlu.[1] One of the points of discussion was the matter of the United States joining the Baghdad Pact. He proposes a number of lines of argument for the continuation of clarifications with Turkey, the main ones being the explanation of Israel's objection to the Americans joining the pact, arguments he raised in his meeting with Dulles on 26 February.[2] In fact, he does not believe there is any chance of the

United States joining the pact. Submission of such a proposal to the Senate at the present time would generate a debate on American policy in the Middle East and it is doubtful whether a positive attitude toward the pact and its basic relevance would arise out of it. Many consider it an ineffectual alliance, restricted in its extent, and not accepted by the majority of the Arabs. Joining it now would only annoy the Soviets without attaining any real benefit.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 412.
2. For the report on the meeting, see No. 189. In response to Dulles's question, Eban replied that it would be a mistake for the United States to join the pact. In particular it would violate the balance in American relations with the Middle East as long as it had no treaty relations with Israel.
3. The mutual recall of the ministers from Turkey and Israel at the time of the Sinai Campaign, leaving the legations in the two countries to be run by chargés d'affaires.
4. Levavi noted in the margins of this letter: "Mr. Fischer, it seems to me that Eban is right." Eban's remarks were cabled to Sasson in advance of his meeting with Zorlu in Paris (see Levavi to the Israel embassy in Paris, 30 March 1958, 130.15/3752/14).

415. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 13 May 1958

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Eban relates to a telegram from Ben-Gurion[1] regarding the plan to integrate three Middle Eastern states–Turkey, Iran, and another state–in an alliance with Israel, whose main activity would be directed against Nasser. This is in consequence of Dayan's meeting with Montgomery in Paris.[2] Eban expresses his doubts as to whether such a plan is practicable. It is based on the assumption that these three states are mature enough to pass from extreme support of the Arabs to a situation of completely ignoring the Arab issue. In other words, is their animosity to Nasser sufficient to be the base for the creation of an alliance directed against him that would include Israel, since over and above animosity to Egypt, they have numerous interests in the Arab world that would cause them to distance themselves from Israel?

His conclusion is that in the absence of a tradition of close relations with Israel, the eagerness of these three states, despite their animosity to Nasser, for ties with the Arab world, the existence of other military alliances (the Baghdad Pact, and the NATO Treaty, to which Turkey is allied) that protect

their borders against the Soviet Union, and the disparate and disorganized relations of Israel, Turkey, Iran and the third country from the strategic and geographical point of view, make the creation of such an alliance most difficult.

In sum, Eban proposes continuing in a number of directions: to hold the proposed meeting between Ben-Gurion and Menderes[4] and to expand the purchase of oil in Iran and other ties with that country. There is much to be done before there can be any possibility of Israel being able to enter into such official and close relationships that would make the creation of such a defensive alliance possible.

Notes

1. This telegram has not been found; but from a draft in the Ben-Gurion archives, dated 6 May, it seems that in it Ben-Gurion ruminated about the possibility of a tripartite alliance of Middle Eastern countries against Nasserism. Objective circumstances were working in this direction, including the instability in Jordan and Iraq and Iran's strong desire for relations with Israel and the clandestine relations it actually maintained with Israel. On the other hand, Turkey did not need this alliance, because of its close ties with the Americans, membership in NATO, and relations with Arab countries, which were less hostile toward it than they were toward Iran. Despite this, there was some basis for such an alliance, especially should the Americans adopt the idea.
2. No report on the meeting with Montgomery has been found. From an entry in Ben-Gurion's diary it seems that Dayan proposed to Ben-Gurion recruiting Field-Marshal Montgomery, who was about to wind up his term as deputy NATO commander, to support the idea of closer ties between Israel and the countries of the periphery (Montgomery was going to visit the United States and meet with President Eisenhower). Dayan met with Montgomery in Paris in April 1958. Evidently Montgomery did not raise the subject in his talks with Eisenhower. (See Ben-Gurion's diary, 14 April 1958; Michael Bar Zohar, *Ben-Gurion* [Hebrew], vol. 3, p. 1324.)
3. Here and below, the name of a third country that was a candidate for membership in the peripheral alliance has been excised. Two paragraphs relating to this country have also been omitted.
4. The reference is to meeting between Ben-Gurion and Menderes; see Nos. 428 and 429.
5. Two lines in the original are illegible.
6. See No. 416.

416. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 20 May 1958

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Refers to Eban's letter of 13 May 1958.[1] He agrees with most of his points and evaluations, but some aspects to which he wishes to relate are missing:

Ethiopia could also be a member of this alliance. Nasser is trying to interfere in that country, and the Ethiopian emperor is a sensible person who knows that his country needs development. He will certainly turn to the United States and other countries for aid, but he is apprehensive of them. He is eager to obtain Israeli assistance. As for Iran, Eban underestimates the value of relations between Iran and Israel. They are at the highest level—with the Shah.

He agrees with Eban that it is not essential, and probably impossible, to create a military alliance with these countries immediately, but amicable contacts and cooperation should be developed, as they are of the greatest significance. This is certainly no substitute for relations with the United States, France, or Europe, which is becoming unified. Nor should the initial contacts with Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Burma be neglected. At the same time, these ties are of the utmost importance and of great potential, and good will on the part of the United States will help to develop them.

Notes

1. See No. 415.
2. Ibid., n. 2.
3. A number of words and paragraphs have been omitted, here and below.
4. For the meeting between Ben-Gurion and Menderes in Ankara in August 1958, see No. 428.

417. R. Pilpul (Addis Ababa) to the Middle East Division. 11 June 1958

Orig.: 130.15/3740/1

He has met with the Ethiopian minister of foreign affairs, Deresa.[1] His impression is that Deresa's attitude to Israel is more friendly than that of his predecessor.[2] Pilpul inquired about the problem of the Incode company[3]

and the establishment of additional companies. He initiated a discussion about the relations between the two countries. He expressed the hope that the time will soon come when the factors preventing Ethiopia from establishing normal relations with Israel will cease to exist. In the meantime, there is nothing to prevent strong ties in the economic field and Israel should exploit Ethiopia's friendliness toward it.[5]

Notes

1. To mark the conclusion of his tenure as Israel consul-general in Addis Ababa, a post he took up in April 1956.
2. Aklilou Abte-Wold, the former Ethiopian foreign minister.
3. An Israeli meatpacking company with interests in Asmara, then in Ethiopia. Later it also began dealing in Red Sea fisheries, in cooperation with Ethiopian interests.
4. M. Sasson noted in the margin of the last two paragraphs: "I have requested an opinion from the economic [division]."
5. In the margin of this document Shiloah wrote, "M. Sasson, send copies to I. Halperin [Harel], P. Sapir, Zvi Dinstein. Please add in your letter to I. Halperin that Deresa served as ambassador in Washington when I served there and we became close friends."

418. Editorial Note

Meeting between Representatives of Israel and Turkey in Rome, 26 June–2 July 1958

In light of the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East in the summer of 1957, in September of that year Foreign Minister Meir decided to examine the possibility of repairing the relations between Israel and Turkey, which had deteriorated after the Sinai Campaign and the recall of the heads of mission to their respective capitals. This was followed by a number of clarifications and meetings in Europe between Eliahu Sasson and Turkish leaders, including Prime Minister Menderes and Foreign Minister Zorlu. In these consultations and in discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was decided to attempt to reach a permanent setup for contacts with the Turks, which, in the absence of overt and normal diplomatic relations, would permit working relations in the political and other spheres. To this end it was agreed to hold a meeting of experts from the two countries.

This meeting was held in Rome from 26 June until 2 July 1958. The Israeli delegation was headed by Shiloah, along with Eliahu Sasson and

others. The Turkish delegation was headed by A. Kural, a senior Turkish foreign ministry official. Issues related to cooperation between the two countries were discussed and it was agreed that the foreign ministers of the two countries should meet as soon as possible. (See report by Sasson to Navon, 16 July 1958, 130.15/3752/15; H. Eshed, *A One-Man Mossad* [Hebrew], pp. 264–265.) See also No. 425.

419. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Rome. 15 July 1958

Coded Tel. 941; Outg.: 130.09/2358/2

Shiloah informs Sasson that Israel has requested immediate action by the United States in putting down the coup in Iraq, with the aid of Turkey and Iran, members of the Baghdad Pact.[1] Israel is arguing that only American support of these two countries will get them to act. Israel warns that if they do not take immediate action, the entire Middle East will fall to Nasser and the Soviets.

Sasson is requested to pass the following message to Shiloah's friend in Ankara,[3] through his Turkish colleague,[2]:

1) If the coup in Iraq is not put down immediately, it will spread to all the Arab states.

2) Israel is acting resolutely in the United States and other centres to bring about intensive action on the part of the West and to reinforce Western supporters and especially the support of any initiative on the part of countries in the region who are afraid of losing their independence.

3) Israel believes that Turkey and Iran have been chosen by fate to take the initiative in putting down the coup. According to information received by Israel there are elements in Iraq, both in the army and among the civilian population, that are prepared to resist the new regime.

4) Israel understands that Turkey and Iran could act on condition that the United States and its allies gave them full support. Israel proposes to apply jointly and in coordination with Turkey and Iran to the United States and take immediate steps to discuss its contribution to this issue.

Shiloah ends by stating that he is prepared to meet immediately with his friend. A similar approach has been made to the Iranians.

Notes

1. See No. 1.

2. Cevat Açikalin, the Turkish ambassador to Italy.
3. Adnan Kural, who dealt with Israeli affairs in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

420. M. Alon (Istanbul) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 July 1958

Coded Tel. 878; Inc.: 130.15/3752/15

He was invited by Zorlu to a meeting in Istanbul in connection with the crisis in Iraq. Zorlu stated that the Jordanians are apprehensive of Israeli military action. He asked whether there is any basis to this apprehension, because this weakens their case. Alon replied that he has no information in this regard, but does not believe that there is any basis to it. In any event, he will pass on the query to Israel and will keep him informed.

Zorlu then asked Alon if he had any information on developments in Iraq. Alon gave him the little information in his possession. He also told him about their activities and the pressure they have applied to Britain and the United States calling on them to act immediately, while the situation is fluid. Activity on a broad front is preferable and not only in Lebanon, Jordan and Kuwait. As far as they know, the coup has not gone smoothly and the Iraqis are afraid of counteraction. Proof of this is that in conversations with the Turkish ambassador the Iraqis have expressed their desire to continue their membership in the Baghdad Pact and to maintain good relations with Turkey. As for Turkey, it will act if the Soviets take action.

He spoke of meetings planned between the foreign ministers and prime ministers of Israel and Turkey.[4,5] He requests that contacts be continued.

Alon requests instructions for his next meeting, especially regarding the Turkish apprehension regarding Israeli action against Jordan.[8]

Notes

1. See Alon to Eytan, 233, 17 July 1958, 130.15/3752/15.
2. Nejat Uçtum, chargé d'affaires at the Turkish legation in Israel.
3. General Türkmen, the Turkish ambassador to Iraq.
4. The reference is to a meeting with Foreign Minister Golda Meir; see No. 425.
5. The reference is to the meeting between Menderes and Ben-Gurion; see Editorial Note, No. 428.
6. The second half of the sentence has been deleted by the editors.
7. In the jargon of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "wireless station".
8. See No. 428.

421. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Ankara. 19 July 1958

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.15/3752/15

Shiloah refers to Alon's telegram of the same day[1] and instructs him to inform Zorlu immediately that the rumour of Israeli action against Jordan is completely groundless. The contrary is the case. Israel aided the British to airlift supplies and soldiers to Jordan,[2] despite the fact that this caused difficulties and dire danger to Israel. As for the proposed meetings–Israel's reaction is positive on condition that secrecy be guaranteed.

Notes

1. No. 420.
2. See chapter 1.
3. Ultimately Sasson did not pass through Turkey.
4. Aluf Mishne Michael Michael, the Israel military attaché in Ankara.

422. M. Alon (Ankara) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 July 1958

Coded Tel. 242; Inc.: 130.15/3752/15

In reply to Shiloah's previous telegram[1] Alon reports that he has met with Zorlu and denied the rumors of plans for Israeli action in Jordan. Zorlu expressed his annoyance at the West's lenient attitude, and especially that of the United States, toward the situation in Iraq. They consider Nasser to be firmly entrenched and prefer to compromise with Arab nationalism rather than fight it. He referred to information he has recently received according to which the English and Americans have taken a decision not to take any steps in Iraq and to be satisfied with action in Jordan and Lebanon. Thus some action should be taken, and to this end he sees his meeting with the Israeli minister of foreign affairs in Zurich as a step in the right direction. The rest of the discussion was devoted to arrangements regarding a preliminary meeting with Sasson in Paris.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 421.
2. Shiloah cabled Alon that to preserve confidentiality it was preferred that the meeting take place in Paris (telegram dated 21 July 1958, 130.15/3752/15).

   In a meeting held in Paris, the entire spectrum of events in the Middle East was discussed. Zorlu's general tone was not optimistic. He diagnosed the winds of an intention in most Western and Asian countries to reach a compromise with Nasser and Arab nationalism. Even with regard to Turkey he was not devoid of anxiety, though he believed that in any case there were still many possibilities of independent action in the region involving coordination and cooperation with Israel. He preferred to leave details of cooperation with Israel for his planned meeting with the minister of foreign affairs. (See E. Sasson to the minister of foreign affairs, telegrams 113 and 114, 26 July 1958, 130.15/3752/15.)

423. Z. Doriel (Teheran) to the Middle East Division. 24 July 1958

Copy: 130.15/3747/3

Doriel describes the atmosphere in Iran following the coup in Iraq.

Internally, there is pessimism regarding the future of the regime. There is hope for reform and a more dynamic government. There has been talk of the leader of the Mardom party being the candidate for prime minister.[2]

In the area of foreign relations there is confusion bordering on alarm. Confidence in the West's deterrent powers and ability to take decisions has diminished. They see the Baghdad Pact as a total failure. They do not believe in the possibility of stopping Nasser nor of the possibility of changing the situation in Iraq or saving Lebanon and Jordan. The measures at the disposal of the Iranians are restricted and vague–union with Pakistan, a pact with Pakistan and Afghanistan, a pact between non-Arab Islamic states. It is all conjecture. There are those who advocate compromise with Nasser and the gradual neutralization of Iran. Supporters of such a compromise assume that the final refusal of the United States to join the Baghdad Pact will be the signal for the search for a compromise with the Arabs. The idea is popular among professional diplomatic circles and the foreign minister[5] tends toward it.

As against these opinions prevalent in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs circles, the state of mind is more positive in the Defence Ministry and the army. There seems to be a rift between these two groups, and the Shah is irresolute.

In the light of this situation, relations with Israel are becoming more vital. Public opinion, to the extent that public opinion exists, is in favour. The

security services are most enthusiastic, and have even raised the possibility of a pact with Israel for restraining Arab nationalism. But it must always be remembered that a tendency for acceptance and compromise with Nasser exists. The decision will be taken after the Baghdad pact meeting in London[6] and the summit.[7] The stand taken by the United States will be decisive. In the meantime, Israeli activity should continue, but the lack of clarity in the stand of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a hindrance. Doriel asks for clarification of the Ministry's stand on the issue and requests permission for local activities in order to exploit the existing contacts with organizations and the press. He suggests that the ambassador to the United States, Eban, should meet with Ardalan, the Iranian ambassador there and that the Israeli ambassador in Paris should meet with Entezam, the Iranian Ambassador in Paris. Requests instructions.[10]

Notes

1. The military coup in Iraq on 14 July 1958.
2. Mardom (the People's Party) was established in May 1957 to serve as an "official opposition". It stood for agrarian reform, limitations on land ownership, benefits for the workers, and the extension of political rights to women. Its founder, Asadollah Alam, an intimate of the Shah, was oil minister in 1955-1957 and prime minister in 1963-1964.
3. In August 1953, the Shah returned from a short exile in Baghdad and began to buttress his standing, moving from the status of a figurehead monarch to head of the executive branch, like the presidential system in the United States.
4. In September-October 1957, the Soviet Union and Syria accused Turkey of concentrating military forces along its border with Syria in order to foment a coup in that country, with the support of the United States. The United States and Turkey rejected these allegations and in turn alleged that the Soviet Union was fanning tensions in the Middle East and endeavouring to turn Syria into a satellite, as demonstrated by the vast quantities of weapons it was shipping to that country.
5. Ali Asghar Hekmat, foreign minister of Iran from May 1958 until June 1959.
6. The reference is to the conference of ministers of the Baghdad pact in London, 28-29 July 1958, after the coup in Iraq. Secretary of State Dulles was present as an observer. The United States committed itself to cooperate with each member of the alliance, except Iraq, on matters of defence and security. See also No. 425.
7. In July 1958 Khrushchev proposed convening a summit conference on the Middle East in Geneva. The conference was never held.
8. See Ben-Horin to Doriel, 10 November 1957,130.15/3747/29. Doriel was asked to desist from his efforts to establish diplomatic relations between Iran and Israel.
9. See No. 413 and n. 7 there.
10. See No. 424.

424. M. Sasson (Jerusalem) to Z. Doriel (Teheran). 4 August 1958

Copy: 130.15/3747/24

Sasson reacts to Doriel's letter[1] regarding the influence of the coup in Iraq on Israel's relations with Iran. He points out that the situation in Iraq has not yet settled sufficiently for final decisions to be taken. So far they have succeeded in the first stage–the removal of the old regime. What the new regime will be like is not yet clear. There is a tendency towards independence and an arrangement with the West and there are signs that it will maintain its independence of Cairo, despite cooperation existing in certain areas, especially in the military field. In his opinion, neither the United Arab Republic nor the U.S.S.R. are certain of the direction of the new regime, in both external and internal affairs.

As for Iran, in Israel there is concern as regards the internal situation in that country, which at this time seems to be the next goal of Soviet domination. The question as to whether the previous instructions regarding Israeli activity in Iran should be changed is serious and requires consultation, but both the minister of foreign affairs and Shiloah are away at the moment. In any event, Doriel is requested to send by mail a detailed proposal of action. Such a proposal would enable serious deliberations and might tip the scale in favour of consultations in Jerusalem or Teheran, as Doriel had suggested.

Notes

1. See No. 423.
2. Iran and Turkey recognized the new regime in Iraq at the end of July 1958; the United States and Great Britain did so in early August.
3. See No. 408 and n. 7 there.

425. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 11 August 1958

Copy: 130.15/3752/15

Shiloah encloses a report of the meeting that took place in Switzerland between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, G. Meir, and the Turkish foreign

minister, Zorlu. This meeting was held as a consequence of the meeting of experts held in Rome from 26 June to 2 July.[1]

The meeting was held clandestinely. Israel was represented by the minister of foreign affairs, Reuven Shiloah and E. Sasson. Turkey was represented by Foreign Minister Zorlu and Adnan Kural.

Following the usual introductory remarks, the Turkish minister stated that the meetings that had taken place during the past year and recent events in the Middle East had necessitated a meeting for exchange of views.

The Israel minister of foreign affairs replied that she too was pleased that the meeting had come about. From an objective viewpoint the two countries have common interests. Events in the region are developing rapidly and it is necessary to draw up a joint plan of action for the free states of the area with the assistance of the Western powers in order to stop Nasser. She asked to hear the Turkish minister's appraisal of the situation and to receive information about the recent meeting of the Baghdad pact.

Zorlu replied that the only achievement attained at the pact's meeting was the agreement of the United States to give far-reaching guarantees to the members of the pact. Apart from that, no agreement was reached on other issues. In his estimation, the West is concerned with seeking ways to placate Nasser. These countries, especially Germany and Italy, are still under the illusion that Nasser can be appeased. He did not give a clear reply to the question as to what caused the heads of the Baghdad Pact states to recognize the regime in Iraq so rapidly.[2] This was perhaps an attempt to separate between Iraq from Nasser. In general, he added, the direction of the new regime in Iraq is uncertain. Turkey is not interested in Iraq remaining within the Baghdad Pact, and has never conceived its membership in the pact to be of any military significance.

As regards relations with Israel, he believes that the two countries should act jointly vis-à-vis the West. Israel and Turkey should act together to expose Nasser's aims, especially in the United States. Dulles himself has a correct view of the situation, but neither the State Department nor the general public understand the danger of Nasserism.

Golda Meir expressed her general agreement with Zorlu's evaluation. She pointed out that the West has made two grave mistakes regarding Nasser in that it equates Arab nationalism with Nasserism and has become involved in a pointless argument as to whether Nasser is a Communist or not. This is of no importance and the decisive question is whether or not he is a tool in the hands of the Soviets. The Russians are not interested in Nasser's ideological convictions so long as he enables them to implement their policies. In her opinion, the danger of Nasserism is not restricted to the Middle East, but extends to Africa and the entire world. If Africa falls to Nasser, Europe will follow. The African states do not want Nasser's leadership, but they require

support from the West. She is convinced that Turkey and Israel would stand against Nasser and would fight against any attempt to harm them, but she is afraid that their strength alone is not sufficient. Action should be taken together by all the independent countries of the region. Countries such as Iran should be strengthened and joint action is the way to do this. It is the fate of Turkey and Israel to guarantee their own safety by saving all the independent countries of the region.

Zorlu related to the preparations for the summit meeting. In his opinion, the United States and Britain wish to hold this meeting under the auspices of the United Nations. France, for reasons of prestige, wishes to hold a "meeting of the great powers" not under United Nations auspices. Turkey objects to holding the meeting outside the United Nations, and sees as dangerous the fact that the great powers would decide the fate of the Middle East without the participation of the countries of that region. Because of this controversy, the Western countries have not reached agreement on their policy for the region. Golda Meir agrees with this approach and stated that Israel would not accept any diktat without being involved in the deliberations.

Then followed a discussion on ways of cooperation between the two countries. Zorlu proposed the institution of regular contacts, such as meetings in Western capitals and especially in Washington. Zorlu agreed that the meetings in Washington would be trilateral–Israel, Turkey, and Iran with the aim of making joint demands vis-à-vis the United States. He also raised the suggestion of a trilateral meeting of the prime ministers of these countries.

Zorlu raised two practical matters: Israeli assistance in obtaining economic aid from the United States, and United Nations support on the Cyprus issue. On this latter matter, he pointed out that Israel has no commitment to Greece and added that the latter country is leading the activities against Israel in every international forum.

It was agreed that the two prime ministers would meet as soon as possible.

The meeting ended cordially and with the exchange of good wishes.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note, No. 418.
2. See No. 424 and n. 2 there.
3. On Golda Meir's African tour, see No. 458.
4. Camille Chamoun, president of Lebanon in 1952–1958, advocated close relations the West. His desire to amend the constitution so he could be re-elected was one of the factors that led to the riots and civil war in Lebanon in May 1958. In July 1958 he

requested and received American military assistance. At that same time he gave up his idea of a second term.

5. Fuad Shihab, chief of staff of the Lebanese army, was elected to succeed Camille Chamoun as president of Lebanon on 31 July 1958. He served in the post until 1964.
6. Rifki Zorlu, the Turkish ambassador to Belgium.
7. By the terms of this agreement, the Soviet Union undertook to evacuate its forces from Iran, forgive Iranian debts and liabilities, and abstain from interference in domestic Iranian affairs.
8. A number of words have been deleted by the editors.
9. See No. 423 and n. 7 there.
10. One sentence has been deleted by the editors.
11. As far as can be determined this meeting never took place.
12. A number of words have been deleted by the editors.
13. One sentence has been deleted by the editors.

426. A. Eban (New York) to R. Shiloah (Jerusalem). 18 August 1958

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.15/3752/15

Eban has met with Zorlu and Kural.[1] Zorlu said that he would like to know how Eban sees the pattern of cooperation between their two countries in the United States.

Eban replied that only the United States has the power and the possibility to unite the forces in the Middle East in a stand against Nasser. The decision to send the Marines to Lebanon thus constituted an important turning point. Unfortunately, the resolve characteristic of Secretary of State Dulles and the Pentagon, is not shared by circles in Congress and the American press, which are continuing attempts to placate Nasser. The situation is even worse in Europe, where countries led by Germany are trying to weaken the anti-Nasser trend.

In Eban's opinion, the policy of stopping Nasser should be continued, including the consistent upbuilding of the military and economic strength of Turkey, Iran and the African states prepared to take a stand against him. Active anti-Nasser measures should be taken in Syria, Iraq and even in Egypt.

In the area of cooperation between the two countries, coordination between them should be continued in the United Nations and the public sphere (Congress, the press). Israel should consistently support Turkey's economic requests in the United States and place its experience and contacts at its disposal. Turkey should support Israel's efforts to obtain military

weapons and United States guarantees for its integrity. Iran should also be involved in this activity to the extent possible.

Zorlu replied positively to Eban's proposals. He reported on Turkey's contacts with the United States. He is pessimistic as regards the future, and believes that further shocks can be expected. Saudia is crumbling and he does not have faith in Sudan's ability to remain firm. He reiterated his regret that Israel does not support the Baghdad Pact. On the other hand, he apologized for the situation of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Arrangements were made for further contact.[6]

Notes

1. Zorlu came to New York to participate in the emergency session of the United Nations about the crisis in the Middle East.
2. See No. 425.
3. To dispatch American Marines to assist the Lebanese government.
4. See chapter 1.
5. See No. 277 (meeting with de Gaulle) and No. 278 (meeting with Couve de Murville).
6. At a further meeting, modes for cooperation between the Turkish and Israeli embassies in the United States on issues of concern to the two countries were agreed upon; see the telegram from Eban to Shiloah, 130.02/2459/9.

427. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 29 August 1958

Copy: 130.15/3750/3

Bartur raises the proposal of strengthening economic relations between Israel and Turkey.

Economic relations between Israel and Turkey are normal and are being conducted within the framework of a trade agreement signed in 1950. The two economies complement each other, with Israel selling industrial goods (cement, phosphates, chemicals, medicines, etc.) and purchasing agricultural products. Both Israel and Turkey receive economic aid from the United States. It is a well known fact that the Americans prefer to grant aid to countries that are organized in a regional cooperation framework, such as the Marshall Plan or the Colombo Plan.[2] Thus, Bartur suggests approaching the governments of Turkey and the United States with a proposal of discussing expansion and facilitation of trade between the two countries, Israeli technical assistance in the fields of agriculture and commerce, the

establishment of joint industrial and agricultural enterprises, expansion of construction works, and cooperation in the area of shipping.

Special attention should be paid to the supply of oil. Turkey needs to import three and a half million tons of crude oil and its products. This could be guaranteed by way of the Eilat–Haifa pipeline. To this end, a three-way meeting should be held with the participation of Israel, Turkey and Iran, for the purpose of planning a joint pipeline.

The success of these joint programs depends to a major extent on the willingness of the United States government to provide financial and political support.

The attempts at increased cooperation with Turkey should be seen as the first phase, which, if successful, could lead to cooperation with Iran and perhaps in the course of time, with other countries, such as Ethiopia. This could bring about the establishment of a regional economic cooperative framework between the non-Arab countries in the Middle East.

He requests the reaction of the minister of foreign affairs in order to begin activity to this end.

Notes

1. The Organization for European Economic Cooperation (O.E.E.C.), established in 1947 to coordinate American assistance to Europe in the context of the Marshall Plan.
2. A program for economic assistance to Southeast Asia put forward in 1950 at British initiative. The idea was to funnel £8 thousand million to member states of the British Commonwealth in Southeast Asia over a period of six years. Later, non-Commonwealth countries, such as Japan, Thailand, and the Philippines, were included in the program.

428. Editorial Note

Meeting of the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Israel in Ankara, 29 August 1958

The military coup in Iraq on 14 July 1958 impelled Turkish leaders to augment high-level coordination and exchanges of views with Israel. Foreign Minister Zorlu raised the idea of a meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries and a decision in principal to hold one was taken when foreign ministers Meir and Zorlu met in Zurich on 2 August 1958 (see No. 425).

The meeting between Menderes and Ben-Gurion and their entourages was held in Ankara on 29 August 1958 in total secrecy. The fact that it was held was never officially made public. For a summary of the decisions taken, see No. 429.

429. Conclusions of the Meeting of the Prime Ministers of Turkey and Israel in Ankara, 29 August 1958

Note

1. One paragraph has been omitted here.

430. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 8 September 1958

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Ben-Gurion informs him of increased contacts between Israel and Turkey and meetings that have been held in this connection, including a thorough discussion he has had with the Turkish prime minister, Menderes.[5] Following this meeting, which was held clandestinely, Shiloah visited Turkey and made arrangements with his Turkish counterpart for activities in the economic and scientific areas. The coup in Iraq, which Ben-Gurion had so feared, has indeed taken place, and this event has helped to bring about closer ties between Israel and Turkey. If the undertakings given by friends in the United States are implemented, it is possible that the idea of a peripheral alliance would become a strong element in the Middle East. He requests that Jacob Herzog be appraised of these developments, and that this information be passed on in secret to two or three friends such as Bedell Smith, Gruenther and Anderson.[10]

Notes

1. The letter is in the Ben-Gurion archives.
2. A number of words, referring to a country whose identity still cannot been revealed, an Israeli personality who participated in the discussions, and matters related to

intelligence cooperation have been excised, here and below, by the editors. All the omissions have been marked.

3. See Editorial Note, No. 418.
4. See No. 425.
5. See No. 428.
6. The attachment has not been found; but see No. 429.
7. See the report on Shiloah's visit to Ankara, [September] 1958, 130.15/3752/15.
8. See chapter 1, Nos. 31 and 37.
9. Details of the foreign minister's meetings have not been found. The meeting between Ben-Gurion and Haile Selassie never took place.
10. Three persons who were close to president Eisenhower—Walter Bedell Smith, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1950-1953 and undersecretary of state in 1953-1954; Alfred Gruenther, the president of the American Red Cross; and Robert Anderson, secretary of the treasury from 1957, who had served as Eisenhower's personal envoy to Israel in early 1956.

431. A. Eban [Washington] to D. Ben-Gurion. [September 1958]

Copy: 130.02/2450/9

Eban refers to Ben-Gurion's letter of 8 September.[1] He was aware of developments in relations with Turkey and had heard about the meeting between the prime ministers and its success. Regarding the question as to whether "our friends in the United States would keep their word", it seems to him that the situation is quite encouraging. He has been informed by the Turks that Dulles has spoken to them on two occasions. He also knows that the U.S. ambassador in Teheran has, on instructions from Dulles, spoken to the Shah and received an enthusiastic reaction. He also knows that the U.S. Ambassador in Addis Abba has been instructed to speak to the Emperor in support of contacts with Israel.

Regarding the last paragraph of his letter, about speaking to the three persons mentioned, he considers that there is no point in so doing and it would be more appropriate to speak directly to Dulles. The reason is that Dulles is already aware of the meeting of the two prime ministers, and if Israel were to inform him directly about it this would increase goodwill without revealing information that is not already known to him. Secondly, since the request is for assistance from Dulles, and not from the three persons mentioned, it is preferable to apply directly to the person concerned and not circuitously. An indirect application could lead to the impression of a vague request for them to speak positively about Israel to some heads of state. Finally, each of these three persons would be required to do his

patriotic duty and report to the president and the secretary of state. Thus it would not be possible for Israel to give them information which had not been made available directly to the president and the secretary of state, since this would undermine confidence and cooperation between the two countries.

Eban concludes that in his opinion the changes occurring in relations between Israel and the West is cause for great satisfaction, especially after the coup in Iraq. He expresses his thanks for Ben-Gurion's defence in the Knesset of the manner in which Israel voted at the United Nations Assembly on the situation in the Middle East.[4]

Notes

1. No. 430.
2. Here and below, the editors have deleted a number of words and paragraphs, referring to ties with a country whose identity still cannot been revealed and to contacts related to intelligence cooperation.
3. On this affair, see No. 306.
4. The reference is to a vote taken at the United Nations on 21 August 1958, at the emergency session on the Middle East crisis. The Arab states submitted a draft resolution that was approved unanimously (Israel, too, voted aye), calling on the Arab countries to respect one another's sovereignty in accordance with the Arab League collective security pact; see No. 55 (Editorial Note). In a Knesset debate, Israel's support for the resolution was criticized, but Ben-Gurion vigorously defended the Israeli vote. (See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Third Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXIV, 8 September 1958, pp. 2625-36).

432. Meeting of the Senior Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 11 September 1958)

Copy: 130.02/2458/3

The meeting was attended by the minister of foreign affairs, the director-general, Shiloah, Comay, Levavi, Fischer, Bentsur, and Elath.

Fischer reported on the message from the Kurdish leader, Badir Khan.[1] He recommended making contact with him in order to reduce the Nasserist influence among the Kurds. He asked how to react. The minister of foreign affairs stated that the contact was of the utmost importance. It was decided to establish direct contact with Badir Khan, but at the personal level and not with his group as such.[2] A visit to Israel was not to be arranged, but a

certain amount of money should be provided to enable him to carry out activities. All this was to be done with the utmost secrecy.

Notes

1. The reference is to the Kurdish leader Kamuran Ali Badir Khan. The first contact with him was made by Maurice Fischer, when Fischer served as an officer in the Free French forces during World War II. See S. Nakdimon, *A Hopeless Hope* [Hebrew], pp. 20-21.
2. Golda Meir met with Badir Khan in July 1959 and promised to "consider favourably" ideas to assist the Kurds in matters of propaganda, information, and culture; see ibid., pp. 55-56.

   In April 1963, Badir Khan came to Israel and met with Ben-Gurion and others. It was decided to transfer the Kurdish matter to the Mossad. Meir Amit, who was then head of the Mossad, proposed to Ben-Gurion to look for methods of operation that would not "tread on the corns of the Turks and Iranians" and received the green light (ibid., pp. 80-81). That same year Israel began helping the Kurds in Iraq; the assistance continued until 1975.
3. The second part of the document, which deals with structural changes in the Foreign Ministry, has been omitted here.

433. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to Emperor Haile Selassie (Addis Ababa). 6 November 1958.

Copy: 130.15/3753/10

Ben-Gurion sends his felicitations on the anniversary of the emperor's coronation. Recently there has been increased danger that the military junta in Egypt will intensify its efforts to gain control of its neighbours. It is essential to gather all possible resources in order to block the expansion of Nasser and international Communism, which is his main support. It is also vital to guarantee the reinforcement and development of those countries whose independence Nasser is trying to subvert. In all its contacts with the countries of Africa and Asia, Israel stresses the necessity of development programs and provides aid and guidance to the extent possible. He has heard with great pleasure reports from Israeli army officers of the progress of Ethiopian officers who have come to Israel for training in commando warfare. He is convinced that this cooperation, modest as it is, will increase and expand. This cooperation will be of advantage not only to Ethiopia and Israel, but also to the peace loving neighbours of His Majesty.

Note

1. The emperor's reply has not been found and it is not clear whether in fact there was one.

434. Memorandum on Ethiopia.[1,2] [Jerusalem], 5 November 1958

Copy: 130.15/3740/5

The memorandum reviews Ethiopia's foreign policy and relations with Israel.

Ethiopia is endeavouring to maintain foreign relations based on identification with the United Nations, membership in the Afro-Asian bloc, and avoidance of manifest identification with either the Western or the Soviet bloc, although its ties with the West are stronger than those with the East.

It receives economic and military aid from the United States, even though the Ethiopians complain that the aid is sparse and that the United States is not yet providing heavy weapons and airplanes. Its contacts with the Soviet Union are cool, and last year the emperor declined an invitation to visit Moscow.

Relations with the Arab states are restricted mainly to Egypt and Sudan. It is attempting to strengthen its ties with Sudan and its attitude to Egypt is of respect mixed with caution.

Despite promises made in the past, diplomatic relations between Israel and Ethiopia have not yet been established;[3] contacts are at the level of consulate-general. They agree that Israel must be strengthened, but refrain from stating this publicly. They complain that Israel is not investing sufficient funds in the area of agriculture and industry. Israeli representatives generally encounter a definite attitude of reservation at the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry, but on the other hand the attitude of the military personnel is more favourable.

The problem of the Falashas:[5] The Ethiopian government does not approve of Israeli activities among the Falashas. The Jewish Agency has ceased its activities among them, and has left numerous unsolved problems. A decision must be taken on measures to solve this problem.

Notes

1. This memorandum and the economic survey (see n. 4 below) were evidently drawn up in advance of Shiloah's visit to Ethiopia; see Nos. 435 and 436.

2. Section 1,which describes the domestic situation in Ethiopia, has been omitted here.
3. Daniel Lewin, the director of the Asia and Africa Division in the M.F.A. until April 1957, visited Ethiopia in 1955, along with the deputy director-general of the ministry, Arthur Lourie. They reached an agreement with the Ethiopians that until diplomatic relations between the two countries were established the respective foreign ministries would consider the consuls-general in Jerusalem and Addis Ababa to be their diplomatic representatives.
4. See "Economic and Other ties with Ethiopia," a memorandum prepared by the Economic Division of the M.F.A. (10 November 1958, 130.15/3740/5).
5. The survey of the situation in the Falasha community, prepared by Hanan Bar-On, discussed the problems and difficulties created by the Jewish Agency activities that had been suspended without warning, leaving behind a train of unfinished problems and broken promises. Bar-On's conclusion was that in the situation that had been created it would be better to transfer the matter from an Israeli to a international Jewish agency, like the World Jewish Congress, so that at the very least the political complications engendered by the suspension of Jewish Agency activity could be avoided. (See Bar-On to M. Sasson, 16 October 1958,130.15/3740/1.)
6. One sentence has been deleted by the editors.

435. R. Shiloah (Addis Ababa) to M. Sasson[1] (Jerusalem). 17 November 1958

Coded Tel. 194; Inc.: 130.15/3740/4

He met with Satterthwaite, United States assistant secretary of state for African affairs and the American ambassador to Addis Ababa. They discussed Israel's efforts to strengthen its ties with Ethiopia and promised American support for this. He asked them if they had found an opportunity in their talks in Ethiopia to discuss this issue. He did not receive a clear reply, but they promised that in their upcoming talks that day with the Ethiopian prime minister they would express the attitude of the secretary of state of the United States.[2] In the second part of their discussion, the matter of the coup in Sudan was referred to.[3] The joint evaluation is that at this point in time the coup cannot be considered as being pro-Nasserist.

Notes

1. Shiloah arrived in Addis Ababa for a working visit on 16 November 1958.
2. The reference is to correspondence between Ben-Gurion and Eisenhower and Dulles concerning Israel's ties with countries of the periphery (see Nos. 31 and 37). During the course of this exchange Dulles expressed a willingness to assist Israel's efforts to strengthen its ties with these countries.

3. On 17 November 1958, there was a military coup in the Sudan, headed by Gen. Ibrahim Abbud. Prime Minister Abdullah Khalil was deposed, political parties were dissolved, and political activity was banned. Parliament was dissolved and the constitution was suspended.

436. R. Shiloah (Addis Ababa) to M. Sasson (Jerusalem). 17 November 1958

Copy: 130.15/3740/4

He reports on his meeting with the prime minister of Ethiopia. The discussion dwelt mainly on the coup in Sudan. Shiloah expressed concern that the country would fall into the hands of Nasser and stressed the necessity for urgent action. The prime minister replied that he shares Shiloah's apprehensions and in the past has warned the United States against this development. They have received little information about what has taken place there recently because they have received no report from their ambassador, but he is certain that everything must be done to avoid a catastrophe. A further meeting has been set in two days time.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 435.
2. See the report on this meeting, Shiloah to the M.F.A., telegram 210, 21 November 1958, 130.15/3740/40.

437. E. Sasson (Rome) to the West European Division. 28 November 1958

Coded Tel. 17; Inc.: 130.09/2358/4

Sasson reports that he participated in the reception for the Shah of Iran. Contrary to protocol, the Shah kept him for longer than expected. The Shah stated that he was pleased that the ties between the two countries are developing in a satisfactory manner and he is following Israel's development with great interest. He is glad to see that Israel is acting in a practical manner in developing its relations with Iran. In reply to Sasson's comment

that normalization between the two countries should be attained and that diplomatic relations be established, the Shah stated that he understands the importance of the matter, but there are reasons for his country and Israel to act with patience, to deal with the issue with great care, and in the meantime to stress common interests rather than formal aspects of the relations.

Note

1. Actually in 1950; see Vol. 5, No. 372.

438. Editorial Note

The Cyprus Debate at the 13th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

On 4 December 1958, the Political Committee of the 13th General Assembly approved by a vote of 31 to 22, with 28 abstentions, an Iranian resolution that called on the three parties involved (Britain, Turkey, and Greece) to renew negotiations, with the participation of the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus, to find a solution to the problem of the island in keeping with the United Nations Charter and taking account of the fundamental rights of the two communities and the unique circumstances of the territory.

Turkey viewed the vote on this resolution, submitted by a Muslim country that was its ally in the Baghdad pact, as a test of friendship with it. The United States, Great Britain, and Israel supported the resolution. Greece, the Soviet Union, and its satellites voted against, while the Arab vote was split: Jordan and Libya voted in favour, the United Arab Republic and Yemen voted against, and Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Morocco, and Tunisia abstained.

Since it was clear that the resolution would not receive the two-thirds' majority required for approval in the assembly plenum, Mexico submitted a compromise resolution that was adopted on 5 December 1958, designated 1287(XIII). It expressed confidence that the parties to the Cyprus dispute would continue their efforts to find a just and democratic solution through peaceful means and in accordance with United Nations Charter (see *Yearbook of the United Nations* 1958, pp. 71-76).

439. Review of Iran-Iraq Relations (Teheran, 1 January 1959)

Copy: 130.15/3747/3

Doriel forwards a review of Iran-Iraq relations following the coup in Iraq.

The main criterion by which the Iranians are evaluating developments in Iraq is the extent to which the new regime in Iraq constitutes a danger to the internal regime in Iran. National and regional considerations of the threat of Arab unification and Nasserism to the security of Iran and the Middle East are secondary. Thus, they welcomed Nasser's anti-Communist address and official propaganda consistently stresses the premise that the Iraqi ruler aspires to ward off Communism and is able to do so. This line is characteristic of Foreign Minister Hekmat whose attitude is conciliatory and Arab-orientated. This attitude is expressed both toward Iraq and Egypt, denying the Communist tendencies apparent in Iraq and playing down both points of disagreement with the Arab states and relations with Israel. The Shah himself supports this conciliatory approach.

As against this approach, there is the activist, security line, connected with the military circles and the press. They stress the communist danger and the insecure situation in the Middle East. From these circles comes the demand to take a hard line, even to the extent of military intervention in Baghdad.

The internal discussion has ended with the victory of the moderates, with the support of the Shah tipping the scales. The proof of this is the conciliatory address of the foreign minister in parliament in which he called on the press and public opinion to show moderation and understanding in the light of the difficulties a friendly neighbouring country was undergoing. The result is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided to strengthen the embassy in Baghdad, to hasten the appointment of an ambassador, and to influence the press to follow its policy.

Notes

1. The reference is to an article published in the *Jerusalem Post* on 28 December, based on a Teheran Radio broadcast in Arabic of the previous day, to the effect that the Iranian foreign minister had announced that the Iranian government had decided to recognize Israel.
2. Tudeh, the Iranian Communist party, was outlawed in 1949, but its leaders continued their activity in exile, chiefly from eastern Europe.
3. The Kurdish leader Mulla Mustafa Barazani commanded the Kurdish army of the Mahabad Republic, established on Iranian territory by the Soviet Union in 1946. After the area was retaken by Iranian forces, Barazani and his followers took refuge

in the Soviet Union. After the coup in Baghdad in July 1958 he was allowed to return to Iraq.

4. Hekmat, the Iranian foreign minister, was indeed forced to resign on 13 June 1959.
5. Assistant Secretary of State Rountree visited the Middle East in December 1958; see No. 440 and n. 2 there.
6. On 5 March 1959, bilateral defence pacts were signed in Ankara between the United States, on the one hand, and Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan on the other. The United States undertook to provide military and economic aid to each country in order to preserve its independence and develop its economy.

440. R. Shiloah [Jerusalem] to E. Sasson (Rome). 5 January 1959

Copy: 130.15/3752/4

Shiloah was sent to Turkey to examine what was considered in Israel as the tendency in Washington and other Western capitals to placate Nasser and to support him in his struggle against Qassim.

In Turkey he first met with Foreign Minister Zorlu and Kural. The foreign minister stated that he has not yet given up hope of the possibility of Iraq maintaining its independence. Much depends on the ability of the West to restrain Nasser and to put a stop to his acts of subversion. Thus it is most important for Israel and Turkey to coordinate their policy toward the West.

Shiloah then participated in meetings attended, in addition to the foreign minister and Kural, by Turkey's envoys in Baghdad and Damascus. From these meetings he has learned that the ambassador in Baghdad, Türkmen, is much more pessimistic than his foreign minister regarding the situation in Iraq and is convinced that Qassim is completely under Communist domination and there was no hope for him. Zorlu disagrees with this approach and advocates a firm anti-Nasserist line. During the course of the deliberations, the foreign minister's attitude was accepted.

Another issue discussed at these meetings was relations between Israel and Turkey—raising the level of the legations to that of embassies. When Shiloah reminded them of former promises to this effect the atmosphere became tense. Zorlu replied that the ties between Turkey and Israel are strong and satisfactory and he does not consider it necessary to take any demonstrative steps.

At the end of the discussion, it was agreed that Kural would visit Israel where the level of relations would be discussed further.

Notes

1. In a speech delivered in Port Saïd on 23 December 1958, Nasser accused the Syrian Communist Party of frustrating the efforts for a union of Egypt and Syria. He defined the Communists as the enemies of Arab nationalism, along with the reactionaries, Zionists, and Israel, and called on the Arabs to intensify their struggle against imperialism and Zionism.
2. Assistant Secretary of State Rountree toured the Middle East in December 1958. The impression in Israel was that in the wake of this visit he reached the conclusion that American policy in the Middle East should be based on Nasser's anxiety about communist penetration of Iraq. It was also thought that Rountree tended to the belief that Nasser could serve as an ally of the West in the fight against Communism. (See Shiloah to Alon, 189, 9 November 1958, 130.09/2290/1.)
3. Melih Esenbel, the secretary-general of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.
4. Ilter and Günver, senior officials in the Turkish Foreign Ministry.
5. In File 130.15/3752/4. Omitted here because of its length.
6. See No. 438 (Editorial Note).
7. Nejat Uçtum, chargé d'affaires of Turkey in Israel, 1957-1960.
8. See Shiloah to Alon, 181, 5 January 1959, 130.15/3752/4.
9. At a meeting in Ankara on 29 August 1958; see Nos. 428 and 429.
10. As far as is known, the meeting in Paris never took place.

441. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 9 January 1959

Coded Tel. 108; Inc.: 130.09/2358/6

Sasson relates to Turkey's apprehensions in carrying out its undertaking to raise relations between Turkey and Israel to ambassadorial level.[1] He suggests that in the course of discussions with Kural in Israel with Foreign Ministry staff,[2] it should be stated that Israel's participation in the forthcoming meeting of the prime ministers of Turkey, Israel and Iran will be conditional upon the arrangements for exchange of ambassadors with Turkey and the establishment of formal relations with Iran.

The argument of Turkey's foreign minister, Zorlu, that the question of ambassadors is only an outward expression, is harmful to Israel. Countries such as Iran and Ethiopia are following Turkey, as they see that practical ties with Israel are possible without formal relations.

In the long run, the alliance between these countries is more in the interest of Turkey, Ethiopia and Iran than in that of Israel. The West is aiming at placating Nasser. Israel is the enemy of Nasserism and will fight it in every possible way and wherever possible. The countries of the West understand this and will not be angry with Israel even if it uses military action to guard

its safety. The situation regarding Turkey and Iran is different. If Turkey or Iran as much as raise a finger against a Nasserist dominated Iraq they will be censured by the West; if they touch a Communist dominated Iraq they will be denounced by the Soviet Union. Worst of all for these countries is the possibility of the establishment of a state by Kurds in Iraq and Syria. The establishment of such a state, which can be expected under a Nasserist or Communist regime, constitutes a danger to Turkey and Iran.

Notes

1. From an exchange of ambassadors by the two countries, as agreed on in the meetings between Menderes and Ben-Gurion (No. 429) and discussed in Shiloah's meeting with Zorlu (No. 440).
2. No report on Kural's visit to Israel in January 1959 has been found. Shiloah visited Ankara in March 1959, at which time Zorlu promised—after consulting with Menderes—that the exchange of ambassadors would take place in October 1959. (See Shiloah to Eytan, 23 March 1959, 130.15/3752/4.)

442. H. Bar-On (Addis Ababa) to R. Shiloah. 15 January 1959

Coded Tel. 40; Inc.: 130.09/2285/11

He has spoken to the Ethiopian foreign minister. He put before him Israel's argument regarding the Middle East and the actions proposed in his cable.[1] The foreign minister replied that they have already expressed to the United States embassy their serious apprehensions arising from the developments in Iraq and the approaches being made to Cairo.[2] He promised that they would also raise the issue in Washington. He complained about the West's inability to act and the fact that the leaders of the West are unable to counter the Soviet deception. He then went on to discuss the situation in Somalia and explained the background to the conflict with Italy[4] and Britain.[5] He complained that they are ready to sacrifice the interests of Ethiopia, which is the most reliable support of the West in the area, in order to build a relationship with Nasser. He requested that Israel, which is one of the "most friendly" countries, make its contribution to solving the problem. He added that they are planning to raise the issue of Somalia at the next convention of the pan-African forum, and they are convinced they will have the support of the West African states.

Finally, Bar-On brought up the matter of the consulate in Jerusalem in

the light of Zauga's return.[7] The foreign minister promised that Israel will not be disappointed and a solution will soon be found.

Throughout the conversation, his bitterness and disappointment with the West was obvious, even though he stressed that Ethiopia has no choice but to maintain its relations with the West. He stressed the strong desire to maintain their freedom and independence, shared by Israel, and the hope that this desire brings the two countries closer.

Notes

1. In this telegram (9 January 1959, 130.15/3752/4), Shiloah asked Bar-On to meet with the Ethiopians and get them to express their grave concern to the United States about the results of Rountree's Middle East tour. (See No. 440, n. 2.)
2. Nasser's supporters in Iraq quickly discovered that Qassim had decided to preserve the country's independence and began to try to subvert him through his deputy Aref. Qassim, for his part, was pushed into an alliance with the Communists, who–in light of the Syrian experience–did not want Iraq to fall under Nasser's control.
3. In April 1958 the United States released the blocked Egyptian accounts, after Egypt agreed to compensate the shareholders of the Suez Canal Company. In May 1958 the United States cancelled several restrictions on the shipment of semi-military goods to the U.A.R. That same month West Germany granted the U.A.R. a credit line of 350 million deutschmarks, in return for a promise by the U.A.R. to return German property seized during World War II.
4. The demarcation of the border between Italian Somalia and Ethiopia was a matter of controversy. Italy preferred to leave the matter to be dealt with by the government of Somalia, which was to become independent on 30 June 1960, whereas Ethiopia preferred to solve the problem in negotiations with Italy while it still controlled the territory. See also No. 451, n. 3.
5. In January 1959, Britain notified Ethiopia that, so far as it was concerned, British Somaliland could merge with Italian Somalia after the two territories achieved independence. Ethiopia was opposed, because it saw this as the first stage in the implementation of the "Greater Somalia" scheme put forward by the British at the end of World War II. Such a country would include, in addition to those two territories, French Somaliland (Djibouti) and the Ogaden province of Ethiopia, which had a large Somali population and water resources.
6. Augusto Assetati, the Italian ambassador to Ethiopia.
7. Wolde M. Zauga, in charge of the Ethiopian consulate-general in Jerusalem, completed his term of duty in May 1958 and no successor was named. On the appointment of an Ethiopian consul-general in Jerusalem, see No. 457.
8. Bar-On reported that the Sudanese had notified the Ethiopians that the traditional friendship between the two countries had not been affected by the coup and that they had no intention of effecting a rapprochement with Nasser. (See Bar-On to Shiloah, telegram 402, 12 January 1959, 130.09/2285/11.)

443. M. Sasson (Jerusalem) to E. Sasson (Rome). 25 May 1959

Copy: 130.15/3750/1

Moshe Sasson expresses some thoughts regarding relations between Israel and Turkey, in the light of Eliahu Sasson's report of his meeting with the Turkish ambassador in Rome.[1]

In his opinion, the delay in raising the level of ties is not connected to the Cyprus issue, as the Turks claim, but rather to the area of relations between Turkey and the Arab states. He divides these relationships into a number of stages: The Baghdad Pact period and the Sinai Campaign, during which the pro-Arab line was dominant in Turkey, a line that, it was believed, would improve relations with Egypt. During this period the friendship with Nuri al-Said was stressed. Then the coup in Iraq took place. The uncertainty of that country's future, as well as the fact that Turkey's foreign minister saw no possibility of improving relations with Nasser, led to closer ties between Turkey and Israel. But during this period the Turks were also most cautious in their relations with Israel, while waiting to see how things developed in Iraq, thus the delay in raising the diplomatic level. Most recently, came Turkey's success in forging relations of confidence with Qassim and the hope of creating a bloc of pro-Western states in the Arab world, which would include Jordan, among others. This development requires Turkey not to exaggerate public expression of its friendliness with Israel. At this moment, the Turks are working along parallel lines: on the one hand strengthening their ties with Iraq, and on the other hand, strengthening practical ties with Israel.

Moshe Sasson stresses that he has his doubts of the success of Turkish aspirations to create a pro-Western axis based on Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Perhaps this is no more than an illusion. In any event, Israel must decide on the stand it will take regarding Turkey's policy: whether to continue to act as if it believes that the delay in strengthening ties is bound up with the Cyprus issue, and to allow the Turks to continue their policy along parallel lines, or to raise the issue outright and demand that they take a decision. Clarification of this policy will make it possible to remove any illusions and for Israel to plan the direction it takes regarding Turkey in the future.[2]

Notes

1. Sasson reported that the Turkish ambassador in Rome had told him, after his meeting with Menderes and Zorlu, that Menderes wanted Sasson to know that he

intended to honour his promise to Ben-Gurion concerning the exchange of ambassadors, whereas Zorlu was more noncommittal and said that he would write to the ambassador after the expected visit by King Hussein to Turkey. (See Sasson to Shiloah, 6 May 1959, 130.23/3125/4.)

2. Eliahu Sasson replied that he certainly agreed with the statement that the reason for the delay in relations with Turkey lay in the pan-Arab arena and not the Cyprus problem. In his estimation, Turkey had not given up on its interest and ties with Arab countries, and since it had common boundaries with two Arab states, Syria and Iraq, it could not fail to be seriously and constantly concerned to improve its relations with them, whatever their regimes. Accordingly Israel must consider how to behave toward the Turks and whether it should pressure them to regularize relations with Israel, even at the expense of their ties with Arab countries, or whether things should be allowed to follow their own course while enjoying the advantages the current state of unofficial relations. Eliahu Sasson himself did not have an answer to this question. (The letter, dated 28 May 1959, is in File 130.15/3750/1.)

444. M. Sasson (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Rome. 22 June 1959

Copy: 93.08/412/9

M. Sasson relates to the anti-Israel statement by the Iranian ambassador in Cairo and E. Sasson's demand that steps be taken to prevent such declarations being made in the future.[1] The entire episode is connected with the dismissal of the Iranian foreign minister, Hekmat.[2] The latter, who resigned recently and is known to be an enthusiastic supporter of Nasser, advocated a pan-Islamic policy and was especially hostile toward Israel. After he returned from accompanying the Shah on his recent visit to Europe, Hekmat convened a conference of Iranian diplomats serving in the Middle East and North Africa at the end of May. He put forward his plan for an "Islamic association" of countries in the region to fight Communism and Zionism. The Iranian ambassadors were instructed to act along these lines and the ambassador in Cairo acted in this manner. The foreign minister's dismissal came shortly after the conference. The Shah was apparently not pleased with this exaggerated activity. But it should not be assumed that the Shah intends to take a strong line against Nasser in the future. It would seem that he will continue to act with caution and will stress friendly relations with Qassim's regime in Iraq.

Israel made sure that its displeasure with these developments was brought to the attention of official circles. Thus, the majority of the members of the government and friends of Israel in parliament dissociated themselves from

this declaration. It does not seem that the new foreign minister[3] will make drastic changes in Iranian foreign policy. Israel will continue unceasingly to expand its circle of supporters in Iran and to make the new foreign minister more aware of the issues, especially as while serving as the Iranian representative to the United Nations he had many contacts with the Israeli representatives there.

Notes

1. In this letter (in File 130.15/3747/29), Sasson called the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to an article in an Egyptian newspaper, which asserted that the Iranian ambassador in Cairo had denied reports about a visit by an Iranian parliamentary delegation to Israel and added: "Persia is a Muslim country and there are no ties whatsoever between it and Israel. I would like to explain that the objective of the publication of these false reports is to implement the Zionist-Communist plot to spoil the relations between the U.A.R. and Iran."
2. Hekmat was forced to resign on 13 June 1959.
3. Djalal Abdoh, the Iranian permanent representative at the United Nations, served as foreign minister from 13 June until 3 October 1959.

445. D. Ben-Gurion (Tel Aviv) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 June 1959

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Ben-Gurion wishes to point out to the Iranians, by means of the Israel envoy to Iran, that the slogan "war against Zionist and Communism" is fraudulent. Egypt, which is putting forward this slogan, maintains close ties with all the Communist countries and in actuality is facilitating the penetration of these countries into the Middle East. The significance of this slogan is in fact a war against Israel by means of Communism.[1]

Note

1. This telegram has not been found; but for the entire affair see No. 444.

446. Sh. Ya'ari (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 June 1959

Coded Tel. W95; Inc.: 130.15/3747/29

Ya'ari reports that he has heard from Mauser, who is responsible for Iranian affairs in the State Department, that Arab envoys in Teheran have submitted a joint protest to the Iranian government against it allowing the presence there of "a representative of the Israeli government".[1] The Iranians replied that that person did not represent Israel but non-governmental interests only.[2]

Notes

1. Doriel, the Israeli envoy in Iran, was officially the representative of the IRIS (acronym of IRan-ISrael) company.
2. Eytan noted in the margins of this document: "Mr. Sasson, they should have answered that this was none of the Arabs' business. W.E., 25.6.1959".

447. Editorial Note

The Attempt to Arrange a Meeting between Foreign Minister Golda Meir and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia

The Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, was scheduled to visit the United Arab Republic and several countries in Europe in June–July 1959. In Israel, the idea was floated of taking advantage of the opportunity to arrange a meeting for him with the Foreign Minister Golda Meir. Israeli feelers met with a positive response and it was agreed that the meeting would take place in Paris on 22 July 1959. But the meeting was frustrated by the French, who were not willing to have it take place in their territory. (On the affair see chapter 9, Israel–France Relations, No. 293, and No. 449 below).

448. H. Bar-On (Addis Ababa) to M. Sasson (Jerusalem). 2 July 1959

Coded Tel. 57; Inc.: 130.15/3753/4

Bar-On submits a number of suggestions and comments for the forthcoming meeting between the emperor and Golda Meir.[1]

1) The minister of foreign affairs should raise the question of the political situation in the region, stressing the penetration of the Soviets and the United Arab Republic. The "periphery" argument should be raised again, emphasizing strengthened ties between the countries of the periphery. The problem of Sudan should be raised, and the emperor asked about his plans for strengthening Sudan's independence. Israel should offer assistance, especially in the international arena, for activity that would be carried out by Ethiopia. The issue of Somalia should also be discussed and active assistance should be proposed for Ethiopian activity in the region.

2) The emperor will certainly raise the problems of Ethiopia's economic situation. Assistance should be offered to their people dealing with these problems, and, especially, a proposal should be made for Israeli intervention at the U.S. State Department and Congress. Reference should be made to the cooperation programs, especially in agriculture[5] as well as the shipping line.[6] Israel's readiness to enter into partnership with Ethiopia mainly in the area of agriculture and irrigation should be stressed.

3) The matter of Israel-Ethiopia relations will be raised, including recognition. It should be explained to the emperor that recognition would be seen as a courageous and wise step that would stress the desire to continue practical cooperation.

Notes

1. See editorial note above.
2. Trygve Lie, the former secretary-general of United Nations, had been named to arbitrate the border dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia and was scheduled to visit them in early August.
3. The letter has not been found and it is not known what matter is being referred to.
4. Deleted by the editors.
5. In talks with an Israeli economic mission that visited Ethiopia in February 1959, the discussions turned in part on the establishment of an irrigated farm with an area of 1,500 hectares, given over mainly to oil-seed and cotton. Israel would purchase the oil-seed, while the cotton would be for domestic use in Ethiopia. Israel undertook to provide experts and the funding would come from Ethiopia, the United States, and Israel. (See Israel Consulate in Addis Ababa to the M.F.A., 15 July 1959, 130.15/3753/4.)

6. The Israeli businessman Avigdor Slucki, in cooperation with a Swiss company and the government of Ethiopia, purchased a 2,500-ton freighter to sail under the Ethiopian flag between Ethiopia and Israel and provide the nucleus of an Ethiopian merchant marine. The vessel was acquired in June 1959 and was supposed to arrive at its home port, Massawa in Eritrea, in September.

449. M. Sasson (Jerusalem) to J. Herzog (Washington). 24 August 1959

Copy: 130.15/3753/4

Sasson explains the reasons for the failure of attempts to arrange a meeting between the emperor of Ethiopia and Golda Meir during their simultaneous visit to Paris.[1] It is certain that the emperor was most disappointed and he sent one of his people to express his regret. He informed the envoy that during his visit to Cairo he spoke with Nasser about relations between Ethiopia and Israel and informed him that he intends to establish ties with Israel "as with all the other African nations". He stated that he would implement this plan on his return home and that when relations have been established he will invite the minister of foreign affairs to visit. Sasson points out that this announcement is important and even if it is viewed with scepticism, the fact that the emperor himself has set a date is positive. He is convinced that if a miracle occurrs and the Turks keep their promise, the Ethiopians will also keep their word. This will bring matters closer in Iran, but care must be taken. At any event, Israel has come a long way during the past year and efforts must continue.

Notes

1. See No. 447 (Editorial Note). For the sabotage of the meeting by the French, see No. 293.
2. Where the emperor stopped over before coming to France.
3. The visit to the United Arab Republic was on 24-29 June and to the Soviet Union on 29 June-12 July.
4. Abte Wold Akale Worq, the Ethiopian ambassador to France.

450. Middle East Division (Jerusalem) to the Consulate-General of Israel in Addis Ababa. 25 August 1959

Coded Tel. 714; Outg.: 130.15/3753/3

The Division suggests that a reply be sent to the message from the emperor of Ethiopia to the minister of foreign affairs.[1] The aim of the reply should be to give greater validity to the promise[3] and accept the invitation.[4] He encloses a copy of the proposed message to the emperor. For the message see Main Volume, p. 857.

Notes

1. See No. 449.
2. Deleted by the editors.
3. To establish full diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Israel.
4. For Golda Meir's visit to Ethiopia.

451. H. Bar-On (Addis Ababa) to M. Sasson (Jerusalem). 22 September 1959

Coded Tel. 72; Inc.: 130.15/3741/3

Bar-On reports on a conversation with an Ethiopian source[1] close to the government. According to this source, the prime minister of Ethiopia objects at this point in time to taking steps to normalize relations with Israel because of the fear of the reaction of Sudan prior to the Sudan–U.A.R. talks. This is because of the situation in Egypt and the increasing deterioration of relations between Ethiopia and its neighbours connected with the drawing up of the boundaries with Italian Somalia.[3] For the time being, this is the decision of the prime minister only, but it is to be presumed that he will also bring his influence to bear on the emperor and the decision will be postponed until after the end of the United Nations General Assembly. In his reply, Bar-On stressed that the initiative to normalize relations has not come from Israel but from Ethiopia. The source promised to obtain further details and especially to clarify the emperor's stand on the matter.

Notes

1. The identity of the informant and the emperor's interlocutor has been omitted by the editors.
2. For her message to the emperor, see No. 450.
3. The demarcation of the border between Somalia and Ethiopia was a subject of controversy. Ethiopia asserted that the negotiations should be based on the border treaty between Italy and Ethiopia, signed in 1908. Italy replied that this treaty could not serve as the only basis for the negotiations, which should be conducted also "on the basis of all international agreements relevant to the matter and on the basis of the peace and interests of the populations, and in accordance with the principles of the United Nations." Ethiopia suspected that the formula "peace and interests of the populations" would lead to a Somali claim on its Ogaden province, which had a substantial Muslim population and significant water resources. The issue was discussed at three sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (1957-1959), but no decision was reached.

452. Z. Doriel (Teheran) to M. Sasson (Jerusalem). 17 October 1959

Coded Tel. 308; Inc.: 130.15/3747

He has met with the director of the Middle East Department of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[1] who gave him information on the situation regarding relations between the two countries and events in Iraq.[2] He stated that the Arab states are protesting against the increasing economic ties with Israel, and he rejects such protests almost daily. The sending of an Iranian diplomatic envoy to Israel is being held up until the return of the foreign minister from the United States.[6]

Notes

1. Sanandji, the director of the Middle East Division in the Iranian Foreign Ministry.
2. Members of the Ba'ath party tried to assassinate Qassim in October 1959.
3. El Al inaugurated a regular air connection between Israel and Iran in August 1959.
4. Abbas Aram, the Iranian foreign minister from 3 October 1959.
5. David Sitton, an Israeli journalist who visited Iran.
6. Ibrahim Teymouri, an Iranian diplomat with the rank of first secretary, was named to represent his country in Israel and posted to the Swiss embassy in Tel Aviv after Switzerland agreed to represent Iranian interests in Israel (see No. 413). For a number of reasons his arrival in Israel was delayed until the end of 1959.

453. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 October 1959

Coded Tel. W328; Inc.: 130.09/2313/9

Further to his previous cable,[1] he has spoken to Henderson and requested that during the meeting with Menderes at the CENTO conference,[2] the issue of exchange of ambassadors between Israel and Turkey be raised. Menderes replied that the delay has been due to the situation in Iraq,[3] but that this is only a temporary delay. He spoke positively about the economic cooperation. In Henderson's opinion, the sensitivity of the Turks is exaggerated, and the exchange of ambassadors will pass without any serious reaction.

Notes

1. In this telegram (7 October 1959, 130.09/2314/9), Herzog reported that with the approval of the foreign minister he had raised with Henderson the absence of progress regarding the exchange of ambassadors between Israel and Turkey and asked him to speak about this discreetly with Menderes and Zorlu at the CENTO conference.
2. The council of ministers of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) convened in Washington on 7-9 October 1959.
3. Members of the Ba'ath party tried to assassinate Qassim in October 1959.
4. Manoutchehr Eghbal, prime minister of Iran.

454. M. Alon (Ankara) to M. Sasson (Jerusalem). 11 December 1959

Coded Tel. 852; Inc.: 130.09/2290/4

Further to his cable,[1] he has spoken with Kural. The latter stated that, as in the past, Turkey considers that it has common interests with Israel. Menderes and Zorlu are making every effort to maintain the cooperation between them, and even to deepen it. Achievements have been attained in two areas especially: in the area of security and in the prevention of unification of the Arab states. Turkey, like Israel, is interested in using every possible means to prevent the unification of the Arab states, whether under Nasser or some other leader. The difference between the two countries is not in their approach but in the tactics to be used, and since Turkey, unlike

Israel, is not in a state of war with the Arab states, it is essential that it maintain and develop relations with Arab states, such as, for example, Jordan. As for Iraq, it is making every effort to ensure that Qassim does not fall into the hands of Nasser, and so far has been successful. Thus, if Israel finds any action of Turkey not to its liking, this is only for the sake of appearances. He stressed once again that Turkey will not consciously or otherwise do anything to the detriment of Israel.

Note

1. This telegram (M.F.A. to Alon, telegram 508, 8 December 1959, 130.09/2290/1) quotes a telegram from Ambassador Sasson in Rome, calling the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the statement by the spokesman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, in advance of Eisenhower's visit to Ankara, that Turkey looked favourably upon unity in the Arab world, on condition that union be attained through legal means and not by force. According to Sasson, through a statement like this the Turks were serving the interests of Qassim without harming Nasser; for Israel, however, this was a deviation from what had been agreed on. Alon was asked to clarify the matter with the Turks.

455. Middle East Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Rome. 13 December 1959

Coded Tel. 114; Outg.: 130.09/2358/5

The Division instructs Sasson to meet with Zorlu in order to thwart the Egyptian scheme to sabotage relations between Israel and Cyprus.

The Egyptians are planning to reopen their consulate-general on the island.[1] The intention is to increase their efforts to prevent the establishment of relations between Israel and Cyprus. Israel is active among the Greeks, but the Egyptians are more successful among this community. Thought should be given to the use of the power of veto by the Turkish Vice President, Kutchuk, in the event that the Greeks appear likely to submit to pressure. To this end, a meeting with Zorlu should be held.[4]

Notes

1. The consulate was closed because of the severance of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Great Britain after the Sinai Campaign.
2. The planned date for the exchange of ambassadors between Israel and Turkey; see No. 441 and n. 2 there.

3. See No. 454.
4. In the meeting between Sasson and Zorlu the latter advised Israel to open an embassy in Cyprus as soon as the island gained its independence. At Sasson's request he agreed to cable the Turkish consulate on the island to maintain contacts with the Israeli consulate. (See Sasson to the M.F.A., 34, 18 December 1959, 130.09/3349/4.) Sasson did not raise the question of the exercise of the use of the veto by Vice President Kutchuk, on the assumption that when there were direct contacts with him it would be possible to ask him without having to go through Zorlu. (See Sasson to the minister of foreign affairs, telegram 35, 21 December 1959, 130.09/2258/69.)

456. Meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Jerusalem]. 20 December 1959

Copy: 130.23/3112/41

At a meeting held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a series of actions were decided upon to ensure the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cyprus and Israel as soon as Cyprus declares its independence.[1] Among the proposals: 1. To continue activities in Ankara in accordance with the discussions between Sasson and Zorlu.[2] 2. To send an envoy to Athens to hold discussions at a high level.[3] 3. To take action in London.[4] 4. To take action in the United States, both at the diplomatic level and by activating connections with the Greek millionaire Skouras.[5] 5. To activate the Jewish community in Greece.[6] 6. To inform Cyprus that in the event of any inimical stand, tourism would be affected. 7. To prevent Israeli journalists from interviewing Makarios.[7]

Notes

1. The proclamation of the independence of Cyprus was postponed to 16 August 1960.
2. See No. 455.
3. The meeting was with Fischer, who characterized it as "very good". (See Israel diplomatic representation in Athens to the M.F.A., telegram 433, 3 January 1960, 130.09/2293/7; Fischer to Meir, 10 January 1960, 130.23/3313/30.)
4. A letter on subject, dated 20 December 1959, was sent to the Israel embassy in London (in File 130.23/3122/41).
5. A letter on subject, dated 21 December 1959, was sent to the Israel embassy in Washington (ibid.).
6. During the discussion it was proposed that the head of the Jewish community in Athens, Mordjoukos, meet with Tsatsos during his visit to Athens in order to win him over to Israel. In reaction, Prato the diplomatic representative in Athens wrote

that he did not think that Mordjoukos could move Tsatsos to this. (See his letter the M.F.A., 30 December 1959, 130.23/3122/41.)

7. Someone noted in the margin of this paragraph, "it was agreed with the director-general and Mr. Gazit that Shalev will pay a visit to the editors and speak with them about the subject."

457. H. Bar-On (Addis Ababa) to M. Sasson (Jerusalem). 25 December 1959

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.15/3741/3

Bar-On met with a senior Ethiopian official who explained that upgrading the status of the consul-general of Ethiopia in Israel to that of minister was in fact a preliminary step to raising the status of the consulate-general to that of an embassy. This step will be taken within a number of weeks. The official requested that a meeting be held with the participation of Bar-On, Tekele Sadok Mecouria[2] and himself in order to make Tekele Sadok Mecouria aware of developments.

Bar-On believes that the official's evaluation should be accepted with a certain amount of caution, especially as regards the time when the status of the relations would be changed. There is no doubt that there is special significance in the fact that this change is not usual in the Ethiopian foreign service. From experience he knows that wheels in Ethiopian bureaucracy move very slowly, and there is no certainty that the event will take place on the anticipated date.[3] In any event, the steps taken should be appreciated, even though this does not yet constitute the establishment of full relations.

Notes

1. Here and below the name of the Israelis' Ethiopian contact has been omitted by the editors.
2. Tekle Sadok Mecouria, the Ethiopian deputy minister of education; from March 1960, consul general in Jerusalem.
3. Ethiopia recognized Israel *de jure* on 24 October 1961, but was not willing to exchange ambassadors. The Israel consulate-general in Addis Ababa became an embassy, but the Ethiopian consulate-general in Jerusalem continued in this status until relations were severed in 1973.

458. E. Ben-Horin (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Accra. 17 January 1958

Copy: 130.23/3106/1

Ben-Horin refers to the discussion about the possibility of extending the minister of foreign affairs' visit to Ghana and Liberia to include the non-independent area of French Africa up to the Belgian Congo. In the meantime the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided not to combine the two visits. The visit to Ghana[2] and Liberia[3] are of a demonstrative nature toward two independent states, and as far as Ghana is concerned, this is a symbolic act reflecting the cooperation that has taken place during the past year. There is also the apprehension that additional visits to French territory would be exploited by Soviet and Arab propaganda which would present it as a gesture toward France.[4] This applies even more so to the Congo. Nigeria has not been mentioned and he requests an opinion on this matter.[5]

Notes

1. See the M.F.A. to the Israel embassy in Paris, 661, 10 January 1958, 130.09/2348/4; Shneerson to the M.F.A., 15 January 1958, 130.09/2348/3.
2. On the visit to Ghana, see Ben-Horin to the M.F.A., 14 March 1958,130.23/3106/1; inter alia it was stated in the report that the trip "had the distinct nature of a goodwill mission."
3. For the report on the visit to Liberia, see Avriel and Ben-Horin to the M.F.A., telegram 253, 4 March 1958, 130.09/2291/4. Inter alia it was stated that the president of Liberia had asked Israel to appoint a resident ambassador in Monrovia, so that he could take a parallel step (in fact, during the course of the year Israel and Liberia each named a resident ambassador to the other). The president promised that at the conference of African states, scheduled to convene in April in Accra (see Editorial Note, No. 461), he would oppose anti-Israel resolutions (he stood by his word), agreed to the proposal by Golda Meir to sign a friendship agreement with Israel (signed on 9 April 1959), and agreed in principle to visit Israel (which he did in 1962).
4. See Najar to the Israel embassy in Paris, telegram 678, 15 January 1958, 130.09/2348/4. In Ben-Horin to the M.F.A. (telegram 275, 18 March 1958, 130.23/3106/1), however, it is stated that the fears that the foreign minister's visit on French soil would cause problems had proved groundless.
5. Avriel replied that the visit to Nigeria depended on the consent of the British Colonial Office, whereas one to the Ivory Coast and Senegal would help consolidate Israel's relations there. (See Avriel to the M.F.A., telegram 168, 27 January 1958, 130.09/3106/1.) Meir did in fact visit Nigeria, but was unable to open an Israeli consulate there because of British fears that Egypt would submit a similar request, as well as anxiety about the reaction of Muslims in northern Nigeria. (See Ben-Horin from Accra to the M.F.A., 287, 25 March 1958, ibid.)

459. Resumé of a Consultation on Africa (3 February 1958)

130.02/4374/20

The consultation was attended by R. Shiloah, Y. Nahmias, E. Ben-Horin and M. Pragai.

Following a review of the independence processes in Africa, the participants discussed Israel's goals and activities in that continent.

Israel has two goals: a political goal, to prevent the new states from forging ties with Arab countries, especially Egypt, and an economic goal, which is the development of economic ties between Israel and the newly-independent states.

Proposals for activities to be carried out in the African states in both these fields were put forward.

It was resolved to draw up a list of all the proposals for the development of Israeli activities to be carried out in Africa.[6]

Notes

1. French approval for the opening of an Israeli consulate-general in Dakar (Senegal) was forthcoming only at the end of 1959. The consulate opened its doors in early 1960.
2. For the relations between Israel and Ethiopia, see chapter 16.
3. An M.F.A. delegation visited a number of countries in British East Africa in June-July 1959; see No. 480.
4. OCTA–the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara. The members of the commission were the African colonial powers–Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal, as well as Ghana and Liberia. Its objective was to provide technical assistance to Black Africa.
5. The M.F.A. gave the approval for Gideon Rafael, the Israel ambassador in Brussels, to pay a visit to the Belgian Congo "which would have the clear character of study and getting to know the situation" (see Ben-Horin to Rafael, telegram 917, 1 June 1959, 130.09/2300/11). For a report on the visit, which took place in July-August 1959, see Rafael to Ben-Horin, 21 December 1959, 130.23/3121/17.)
6. No document of the sort has been found in the files of M.F.A.

460. D. Lewin [Rangoon] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 6 February 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3096/23

Lewin reviews Israel's current relations with Burma. He states that there is no possibility of forging relations between the two states solely on the basis of personal friendship. An infrastructure of practical cooperation must be built. He lists the joint Israel–Burma projects in the areas of agriculture, engineering, and cooperation in commerce and industry. He stresses the necessity for further visits to Israel by Burmese officials and of leading Israeli personalities to Burma. The visits by Dayan, Peres[5] and Sapir were of the utmost importance, and he encourages the minister of foreign affairs to make good her promise to visit.

Lewin asserts that interstate relations throughout the world have undergone a basic change since the end of World War II. The centre of gravity has moved away from relations between the larger countries themselves, to relations between the major powers and the smaller states, or between the smaller states themselves. The mainstay of these relations is technical aid. Such aid is expensive, but yields results in the long run. Because of the great expense, it is desirable that Israel concentrate on a limited number of countries, and he suggests that Burma be one of these. In the course of time, Israeli activities in Burma will serve as a model for activities in other countries.[13]

Notes

1. Lewin took up his post as Israel ambassador to Burma in December 1957.
2. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, U Nu's party. See also No. 484, n. 2.
3. For security reasons, the Government of Burma decided to settle demobilized soldiers in Namseng Province on the Chinese border. This settlement enterprise was to follow the model of the Lakhish region in Israel. In November 1958 a group of 51 demobilized Burmese soldiers, accompanied by their families, arrived in Israel for agricultural training.
4. The Agricultural and Rural Development Corp., run by the Burmese army.
5. The chief of staff, Moshe Dayan, and the director-general of the Ministry of Defence, Shimon Peres, visited Burma in January 1958.
6. In Kyaukme, in the Shan States, Israel established an experimental farm where four Israeli experts were employed.
7. The Shan States, in northern Burma, are home to a minority that is ethnically and linguistically close to the Thais and has been granted limited autonomy.
8. An Israeli economic mission headed by David Hacohen visited Burma in February-March 1956. On 5 March an economic agreement between two countries was signed.

9. Pinhas Sapir, the minister of commerce and industry, visited Burma in March 1958. During his stay the question of a joint tire factory was raised but no agreement was reached. (See Sapir to the M.F.A., telegram 850, 15 March 1958, 130.09/2361/1.)
10. Uzi Yisrael Nedivi, first secretary for economic affairs in the Israel embassy in Rangoon.
11. Hava Eliasberg (Hareli), chief assistant to the director of the Economic Division in the M.F.A.
12. Golda Meir visited Burma in 1962.
13. Gazit replied to this letter that Meir had requested him to note that Lewin's letter had given her hope "that various matters between us and the Burmese could be rectified in the not-too-distant future" (see his letter to Levin, 24 February 1958, 130.23/3096/23). The Asian and African Division in the M.F.A. replied that his letter "gave a very clear picture of the state of our relations with Burma" and that his proposals were intelligent "and we hope they can be implemented". (See the letters to Levin, 23 February 1958, ibid.)

461. Editorial Note

The Conference of Independent African States in Accra

At the initiative of the prime minister of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, the first conference of independent African states was held in Accra on 15-22 April 1958. Those participating were Ethiopia, Ghana, Libya, Liberia, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia, and the United Arab Republic. The conference dealt chiefly with the issues of Algeria, apartheid in South Africa, and the Palestine question. At the end of conference a joint communiqué was published expressing support for the United Nations Charter, for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Bandung Declaration of 1955, which expressed inter alia support for respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and refraining from aggression. The United Arab Republic tried to obtain a resolution supporting "the rights of the Arab people in Palestine"; because of the opposition of Liberia and Ghana, however, the final resolution called "for a just solution of the Palestine problem".

462. E. Avriel (Accra) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 July 1958

Coded Tel. 491; Inc.: 130.23/3103/10

Avriel adds to his previous reports on his meeting with the prime minister of Ghana, Nkrumah.[1] The prime minister praised Israel for the aid it is providing: "Only Israel is able to provide aid at the required pace without political conditions; we must redouble our cooperation with Israel." It was agreed that a trade agreement would be signed,[7] a naval school would be opened,[8] the functions of the Mekorot Company would be increased, and the activities of the Black Star Shipping Company[9] would be developed. Nkrumah confirmed his intention to visit Israel. He spoke about his visit to Egypt. He found it isolated, Nasser's regime is unstable and he has become dominated by the Russians. The talks with Nasser were important and he has been invited to resume them.[4]

In his reply, Avriel expressed his satisfaction at the prime minister's comments and assured him of Israel's full support in fulfilling his desires to become the leader of Africa, as Israel prefers him to Nasser. However, the condition for this support is that Ghana maintains a real friendship with Israel, like Liberia, which proved its friendship at the Accra Conference.

Avriel's impressions from the meeting are that Nkrumah has not been entrapped by the Nasserists, but that he is deeply impressed by Nasser's international approach and will not work against him. The fact that Nasser considers himself an international rather than African leader, simplifies matters for Nkrumah, who wishes to become the leader of the countries of Africa. The period of flourishing relations with Israel has come to an end and they will be more cautious; they are concerned about Arab pressure, and will express their appreciation of Israel less publicly. In Avriel's opinion, Israel should step up its practical and information activities in Ghana.

Notes

1. In this telegram, as well as in telegram 478 (both of them dated 1 July 1958, in File 130.23/3103/10), Avriel reported that Nkrumah had told them that during his visit to Egypt (in June 1958) he explained to Nasser that his ties with Israel were on the basis of "Ghana's independent policy" and promised to visit Israel when he returned from his trip to India (which was scheduled for January 1959).
2. In June 1958, Nkrumah visited a number of Arab countries in North Africa.
3. Nigeria was scheduled to become independent in October 1960.
4. Nkrumah visited Cairo again in January 1959; see No. 468.
5. The Liberian finance minister, Ch. D. Sherman, had conducted negotiations with the

managing director of Zim, Naftali Wydra, about the possibility of Zim providing assistance to Liberia in the field of shipping. Ultimately nothing came of this.

6. See Editorial Note, No. 461.
7. On the incident in the Ghanaian parliament during the debate on ratification of the commercial treaty with Israel, see No. 487.
8. In fact, a school for merchant marine officers in Ghana, under Israeli management, was opened in July 1958.
9. Black Star, a shipping firm jointly owned by Zim and the Government of Ghana, was established in 1957. On the end of the partnership with Zim, see No. 487, n. 4.
10. Nkrumah never did visit Israel.
11. In a joint communiqué published at the end of Nkrumah's visit to Cairo, the two governments called for "a just solution" to the Palestine question–in the format of the resolutions of the Accra conference of April 1958.

463. D. Lewin (Rangoon) to the Asian and African Divison. 14 July 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3096/23

Lewin has held an official meeting with U Nu. The prime minister apologized a number of times for not having met with Lewin before and reiterated the phrase "I am very bad". Lewin replied that he was aware of the prime minister's difficulties stemming from the government crisis,[4] but stated that he was working well with the Burmese institutions. However, he did request the prime minister's intervention on two issues–the agricultural farm and the provision of credit. U Nu promised his assistance. In connection with the farm, U Nu mentioned that he has heard rumours that there have been problems with Israeli experts, a situation that has not made a positive contribution to the relations between the two countries. Lewin replied that Israel is aware of the problem and is now being more cautious in the selection of experts. U Nu referred a number of times to the crisis in his country. He said that elections will be held during the course of the year and he hopes that the results will enable him to establish a stable government. He stressed that as long as he is in power there will be no change in relations with Israel. Lewin repeated Ben-Gurion's written invitation to visit Israel. U Nu replied that he earnestly desires to visit Israel and especially to meet with Ben-Gurion, but believes that he will be required to visit many countries prior to that because he owes them visits. Therefore, he would prefer to make a private visit, incognito.[6]

Notes

1. U On, personal adviser to Prime Minister U Nu.
2. Peres and Dayan visited Burma in January 1958; Sapir, in March 1958.
3. Ben-Gurion's letter, dated 11 December 1957, is in File 130.23/3096/22.
4. In June 1958, U Nu barely managed to squeeze by a parliamentary motion of no confidence, with the support of the Communists. This alliance aroused concern in various circles, including the Burmese military.
5. The letter, dated 11 July 1958, is in File 130.23/3096/23. U Nu expressed a desire to visit Israel again, but because of his many engagements had to defer this.
6. The M.F.A.'s response related chiefly to what U Nu had said about the Israeli experts. His remarks stemmed from rumours that had reached him but had been shown to be groundless or exaggerated. A way had to be found to mend the impression created with him, and inter alia, by being careful in the selection and behaviour of the experts. (See Ben-Horin to the Israel ambassador in Rangoon, 28 July 1958, 130.23/3096/23.)

464. Asian and African Division (Jerusalem) to N. Lorch (Colombo). 15 July 1958

Copy: 130.23/3119/59

Ben-Horin, Director of the Division, writes to Lorch who has arrived in Colombo as chargé d'affaires.[1] There is no hope of immediate achievements in Ceylon and his main task is in the area of public relations. A certain amount of interest in Israel has been expressed in that country, but prejudice and suspicion exists, as in India. Therefore attempts must be made continuously and with patience to eradicate these erroneous attitudes. Because of the limited means at the disposal of the Israeli representative, his work must be selective but should not be restricted to political circles and should extend to the university, local government, the clergy, and journalists. Informational material is being sent from Israel and should be distributed to selected addresses. As for obtaining permission for the visit of the Israeli ambassador (with permanent residence in Rangoon), it seems that the Ceylonese are avoiding setting a date and there is no point in pressing the issue. In the meantime the burden of the work will fall on the chargé d'affaires.

Notes

1. Lorch arrived in Colombo in March 1958 as charge d'affaires *ad interim* in the legation. The ambassador in Rangoon served as non-resident minister to Ceylon.

2. In April-May 1958, riots broke out in Ceylon, accompanied by reciprocal massacres between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority.
3. Because Shimoni's successor, Daniel Lewin, had not yet presented his credentials in Ceylon.
4. Dr. Vikramasinghe, the former deputy minister of health, met with Sharett in 1956. See Moshe Sharett, *An Asian Tour* (Hebrew), pp. 112 and 120.
5. Raja Hewawitarne, a businessman and formerly the Ceylonese minister in Rangoon.
6. In the letter, Lorch asked about the accreditation of a Ceylonese minister to Israel and was told that de Soyza had not yet had time to speak about that with the prime minister. In response to his question about the presentation of the credentials of the Israel minister in Ceylon he was told that he would have to wait "a while longer" because of the state of emergency. (See Lorch to the M.F.A., 25 June 1958, 130.23/3119/59.)

465. E. Najar (Tokyo) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 9 October 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3104/30

Najar refers to the proposal to raise the representation between Japan and Israel to ambassadorial level. The matter was discussed during the course of the visit of Minister Sapir,[1] but in the meantime it has become apparent that the Japanese have reservations about closer ties with Israel. Overtures in this direction have been made, for example a suggestion by a Japanese businessman to Foreign Minister Fujiyama that received a negative response, citing Arab pressure. Najar also put forward a new proposal—the appointment of the minister in Japan as non-resident minister in South Vietnam. He requests the Ministry's reaction to this proposal.[2]

Notes

1. Sapir visited Japan in February 1958 as part of his Far East tour to investigate the possibilities of increasing commercial ties and economic cooperation between Israel and countries of the region. In Japan he signed an agreement for the purchase of tankers and industrial equipment. The talks between Dagan and Kanayama, the director of the Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Oceania division of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, were held in the context of Sapir's visit. (See Dagan to the M.F.A., telegrams 396 and 406, 18 and 22 February 1958, 130.09/2315/9; Sapir to Meir and Eshkol, telegram 405, 22 February 1958, ibid.)
2. Eytan noted in the margins of this document: "I responded in the negative." See also his telegram to Najar, telegram 413, 16 October 1958, 130.09/2315/7.

466. A. Caspi (Bombay) to the Asian and African Division. 17 October 1958

Copy: 130.23/3101/5

Caspi reports on a strange and perplexing conversation between the Israeli delegation to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund convention that took place in India, and the Indian Minister of Finance, Morarji Desai. The Israeli delegation, headed by the Minister of Finance, Eshkol, the Governor of the Bank of Israel, Horowitz, and other members, came for what was supposed to be a short courtesy visit but, at the initiative of the Indian minister, turned into a philosophical-religious discourse. In the course of the conversation, the minister referred to the Jews as "usurers" and stated that Israel was established by "persons in powerful positions", and should never have been established; however since it is a fact, in his opinion, should continue to exist. The Israeli delegation left the meeting with an unpleasant impression. After this meeting and during the course of the convention, the Indian minister tried a number of times to make contact with Minister Eshkol, apparently to correct the impression, but Eshkol conspicuously ignored him.[1]

Note

1. The M.F.A.'s reply: "We have been taught another lesson in our relations with the Indians". (6 November 1958, File 130.23/3101/5).

467. D. Lewin (Rangoon) to the Prime Minister of Ceylon

Notes

1. In December 1958, Lewin came to Ceylon to present his credentials. He had two meetings with Prime Minister Bandaranaike. He raised two subjects: the accreditation of the Ceylon minister to Israel and a visit to Israel by a Ceylonese delegation to see in what areas Israel could help Ceylon. Bandaranaike asked Lewin to send him a personal letter on the subject from Rangoon (see Lewin to the M.F.A., 29 December 1958, 130.23/3119/59).
2. Ceylon did not confirm the accreditation of its minister in Rome as minister to Israel until December 1959. In September 1959 Bandaranaike was assassinated and the decision to accredit the minister was taken by a transitional government. On the decision by Bandaranaike's widow, who became prime minister in 1960, to cancel the accreditation of the minister, see Vol. 14, No. 450.

3. In the margins of this paragraph Ben-Horin noted, "how will we bear it anyway?" In any case the Ceylonese delegation never visited Israel.
4. Bandaranaike replied that he hoped that it would be possible to make arrangements so that the delegation could visit Israel "in the not too distant future". With regard to accreditation of the minister he wrote that he hoped arrangements could be made for his coming to Israel "when the time came". (The letter, dated 29 January 1959, is in File 130.23/3119/59.)

468. E. Avriel (Accra) to the Asian and African Division. 16 January 1959

Tel.; Inc.: 130.23/3103/10

Avriel has met with Nkrumah. He raised a number of current issues, including the matter of the Air Force[1] and the Black Star Company.[2] He asked Nkrumah about his impressions of his visit to Cairo and India. Nkrumah's meetings with Nasser and Nehru have convinced him that he personally has a central role to play in the anti-colonial campaign. The reason is that politically he is younger, more stable, and less disillusioned than Nehru and he has nothing to learn from Nasser. During the course of his meeting with Nasser he heard an important and positive statement, the like of which he had not heard previously, but it is yet too early to divulge it. Nkrumah said he intends to visit Israel, but the timing depends on the development of an important idea that will lead to an improvement of Arab–Israel relations.[3] He reiterated the usual statements about the importance of Israeli aid and his high estimation of the State of Israel.

Avriel's conclusions:

He did not find out anything new during the conversation. Nkrumah probably has some plan, not in the direction of peace between Egypt and Israel, but a more comprehensive plan that will in any case lead to such an improvement. He is more serious and more dangerous than previously thought.

Notes

1. In January 1959 Ghana decided to have Israel train its Air Force pilots. This arrangement irritated Britain. (See Avriel to the M.F.A., 25 January 1959, 130.17/2031/6.) The flight school, with Israeli officers as instructors, began operation in September 1959, but the British were able to get Ghana to inform Israel in October 1960 that the Air Force contract, scheduled to expire on 30 April 1961, would not be renewed. British instructors replaced the Israelis. (See Vol. 14, No. 492, n. 2.)

2. The shipping company owned jointly by Zim and the Government of Ghana; see Nos. 462 and 487.
3. Nkrumah never visited Israel.
4. Nkrumah stopped over in Cairo on his way back from his visit to India.

469. M. Gazit [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 28 January 1959

Copy: 130.23/3087/9

Gazit proposes to establish a section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within the International Organisations Division, that will examine the possibilities for cooperation and technical aid to developing countries. The section will gather information about requirements and initiate cooperative activities in interested countries. The section will receive detailed political directives from the regional divisions [i.e., the Asian and African Division] but will maintain direct contacts with the various missions regarding all technical matters involved in implementing these tasks. In addition, a high-level committee will be established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where matters of principle and priorities in this area will be determined.[3]

Notes

1. This memorandum is in File 130.23/3087/9.
2. No material on the establishment of this committee has been found.
3. In 1960, the section became an independent division, the Division for International Assistance and Cooperation. The word "assistance" was dropped from its name in 1961.

470. Y. Bavly (Cape Town) to M. Comay (Jerusalem). 16 February 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3094/14

Bavly refers to recent political changes in South Africa and their implications for Israel's relations with that country.

Israel should continue its correct relations with South Africa in three areas despite the rise to power of the Verwoerd[4] government: (1) The Jewish

community, which is perhaps among the best in the world and which gives Israel financial and moral support. (2) The apprehension that a cooling of relations between Israel and South Africa would strengthen Egypt's standing in that country, which would be to the detriment of Israel. (3) The commercial ties between the two countries, which are important, and it is hoped will be expanded with Israel's joining GATT.

However, he believes that Israel's attitude at the United Nations should be changed. During the past three years he has done his utmost to moderate the line taken by the Israeli mission to the United Nations regarding South Africa.[5] Now with the new government and its overt apartheid policy, this is no longer justified.

Notes

1. The first part of the letter, which dealt with domestic affairs in South Africa, has been omitted here.
2. Two issues associated with South Africa were on the agenda of various organs of the United Nations: the apartheid system and the continued South African control of South-West Africa (today Namibia).
3. J.G. Strijdom, prime minister of South Africa in 1953-1958.
4. H. F. Verwoerd, who became prime minister of South Africa in 1958.
5. The Israeli representatives at United Nations generally voted against South Africa, despite the position of the minister in Pretoria, who asked that consideration be given to the country to which he was posted. In any case, Israel voted for draft resolutions calling on South Africa to return South-West Africa to the United Nations as a trust territory, at both the 13th session of General Assembly (in 1958, before this letter from the minister) and at the 14th session, after the minister withdrew his objections.

471. Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 17 February 1959

Copy: 130.02/4374/20

The meeting was convened by the minister of foreign affairs and was attended by E. Avriel, D. Lewin, R. Shiloah, Zena Harman, and E. Ben-Horin.

The minister of foreign affairs reported on the decision to establish a special section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for international co-operation.[1] In addition, a high-ranking committee will be established to provide directives in principle as well as an interministerial committee with the purpose of coordinating with the Technical Aid Bureau in the Prime Minister's Office.

Avriel outlined Israel's aid to Africa, and especially to Ghana. Lewin reported on activities in Burma.

The minister of foreign affairs requested Avriel and Lewin to draw up a list of requests for aid from countries in West Africa and Burma and estimated requests expected during the following six months.

Notes

1. See No. 469.
2. See No. 462.
3. See No. 463.
4. See No. 472, n. 2.
5. This treaty was signed in March 1959.

472. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to General Ne Win (Rangoon). 1 March 1959

Notes

1. Reuven Barkat, head of the political department of the Histadrut, was active in establishing closer relations between Israel and Asian countries.
2. In September 1958, U Nu asked the chief of staff, Gen. Ne Win, to take over the reins of power. Ne Win set up a non-party government in October 1958.
3. No reply to this letter has been found; perhaps none was forthcoming.

473. E. Najar (Tokyo) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 March 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3123/3

Najar reiterated his previous request regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea.[1] He has recently heard that the Swedish ambassador in Tokyo has put forward a similar request and it was accepted, despite the fact that Sweden has an embassy in the People's Republic of China. He requests that the matter be reconsidered.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 465.
2. Ben-Horin replied that it had been agreed not to deal with the subject of relations with South Korea in the foreseeable future, but there was no objection to his visiting that country, on condition that it was defined as a private visit (Ben-Horin to Najar, 4 May 1959, 130.23/3123/3). On the change in Israel's position about the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea, see Vol. 14, No. 449.

474. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Tokyo. 26 April 1959

Coded Tel. 473; Outg.: 130.09/2315/7

Mrs. Meir informs the minister in Tokyo of the impending visit to Japan of Bentov, minister of development. The visit is semi-official and its purpose is to study local basic chemical industries, the feasibility of marketing minerals and salt, the possibility of Japanese investments in Israel and the recruitment of Japanese experts. The minister of foreign affairs encloses a list of institutions Bentov would like to visit and personalities he wishes to meet.[3]

Notes

1. Eliezer Preminger, the deputy director-general of the Ministry of Development, and Mordechai Makleff, the director-general of the Dead Sea Works, accompanied Minister Bentov.
2. See No. 476.
3. Najar reported on this visit in his telegrams 588 and 589, both dated 15 May 1959 (in File 130.09/2315/10). To the Japanese, the visit was defined as motivated by a desire for direct impressions of the situation in Japan and the possibilities for economic cooperation. Political questions were not raised.

475. E. Avriel (Accra) to the Asian and African Division. 14 May 1959

Orig. 130.23/3114/9

Avriel reports on the consultation held in Accra regarding Israeli activities in Nigeria. These activities are being carried out by the Israeli envoy

accredited to Accra, who spends a considerable amount of time in Nigeria, as well as by an unofficial representative, who works in Nigeria under the guise of being a representative of the Solel Boneh construction company.[1] During the course of the consultation, various projects and meetings were reviewed. There is a problem of maintaining the balance between activities being carried out in the Eastern, Western and Northern regions of this federal state. It has been decided to give special attention to the Northern region.

Notes

1. Because the British refused to allow Israel to open a consulate in Nigeria, Israel decided to operate in that country through two individuals: Alexander Tsur, the first secretary in the Israel embassy in Accra, who made long visits to Nigeria, and Yeruham Cohen, who officially was the representative in Nigeria of the Solel Boneh construction company.
2. The capital of Eastern Nigeria.
3. F. Okotie-Eboh, the federal finance minister of Nigeria (he visited Israel in July 1959).
4. Nnamdi Azikiwe, prime minister of the Eastern region of Nigeria.
5. The identity of "Potock" is unclear.
6. Aminu Kano, a Muslim from northern Nigeria and a member of the Nigerian federal parliament.
7. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, federal prime minister of Nigeria.
8. Alexander Hacohen, a representative of the Dizengoff-West Africa Shipping and Trade Company.
9. A Gadna (paramilitary youth movement) delegation invited to Ghana also toured Nigeria and Liberia in April 1959. The young people were the guests of the youth organizations in the host countries.

476. A. Caspi (Bombay) to the Director of the Asian and African Division. 15 May 1959

Copy: 130.23/3101/5

The consul reports on the meeting of Minister of Development Bentov with Nehru.[1] The meeting began with remarks on the advantages and disadvantages of artificial fertilizer. When Bentov attempted to move the conversation into the practical field, by hinting at the possibility of joint projects between American Jews and India, Nehru remained completely silent. When Bentov asked the prime minister his opinion about some

possibility of cooperation, Nehru replied: "Yes, by all means", and again fell silent. Neither the Minister nor Nehru touched upon the matter of relations between India and Israel.[3]

Notes

1. Mordechai Bentov, minister of development, visited India at his own initiative.
2. B. S. Murthy, Indian undersecretary for community development.
3. The reply from the M.F.A. (letter dated 22 May 1959, in File 130.23/3101/5) stated that the lessons of the past in relations with India should be learned and conclusions drawn.

477. E. Ben-Horin (Jerusalem) to the Bureau of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 19 May 1959

Copy: 130.23/3102/15

Ben-Horin raises the issue of diplomatic relations with South Vietnam. This state is growing stronger and he is not convinced that the sensitivity of the People's Republic of China need be considered. A proposal has been put forward to establish consular relations as the first stage. The government agrees, but the government of South Vietnam has hinted that it is interested in full diplomatic relations. The minister of foreign affairs is prepared to bring this idea before the government, but in the meantime a report has been received from Lewin from which it appears that the government of South Vietnam is not keen to establish formal relations at this stage and proposes to make do with informal practical relations.[3]

Notes

1. An economic mission from South Vietnam visited Israel in January 1959.
2. Dated 11 May 1959, in File 130.23/3102/15.
3. In the margins of this document Eytan noted: "Mr. Ben-Horin, if so, what is the conclusion? To leave the matter alone? W.E. 23.5.59." Ben-Horin replied, "Director-general, for the moment, yes." In 1960 Israel decided to establish full diplomatic relations with South Vietnam; Ben-Horin, then the ambassador in Rangoon, was sent to Saigon to hold contacts on the matter. This mission, too, yielded no results. (See Vol. 14, No. 463.)

478. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to E. Avriel (Accra). 15 June 1959

Copy: IMDEA 890.73/1162

Ben-Gurion replies to Avriel's letter concerning a possible visit to Ghana.[1] He explains at length why the visit is not desirable. Nkrumah has visited many countries and has neglected to visit Israel. The activities of Israel in Ghana are of the utmost importance and most successful, and he is certain that Nkrumah would have benefited from such a visit to Israel. Ghana's full acceptance of Israel cannot be expected and Israel does not expect reciprocity from its relations with the states of Africa and Asia, but in relations between two countries there must be a minimal amount of consideration. In general, he believes in the future of ties between Israel and the countries of Asia and Africa. Israel has much to offer these states and they can learn from the Israeli model of development.

Notes

1. Not found.
2. Foreign Minister Meir visited Ghana in March 1958; see No. 458.

479. Review of the Latin American Division. [Jerusalem] 2 July 1959

Copy: 130.23/3106/5

The review contains a detailed description of the attempt by Venezuela to move its legation from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. The affair began with the participation of Venezuela, as an observer, in the conference of Arab oil producing countries in Cairo.[2] Following the conference, the minister of fuel and mines, who led the delegation, influenced his government to take a decision to move its legation to Tel Aviv. Israel took action to forestall this decision, including a visit by the minister of foreign affairs to Venezuela, during her Latin American tour in June 1959. As a result of this visit and the meetings held during it, the Venezuelan government cancelled the decision.

Notes

1. See the M.F.A. to the Israel legation in Caracas, 84, 14 May 1959, 130.09/2355/11.
2. In April 1959, at the initiative of the Arab League, a conference of Arab oil producers was held in Cairo. (Iraq was absent because of its poor relations with United Arab Republic.) Venezuela sent an observer mission, headed by its fuel and mines minister, Juan Pablo Perez Alfonzo.
3. See Avidan to the M.F.A., telegram 46, 16 May 1959, 130.09/2255/12.
4. See the M.F.A. to the Israel legation in Caracas, telegram 86, 17 May 1959, 130.09/2355/11.
5. See the M.F.A. to the Israel legation in Caracas, telegram 92, 3 June 1959, ibid.
6. See Meir to the M.F.A., telegram 50, 19 June 1959, 130.09/2355/12.
7. See the Israel legation in Caracas to the M.F.A., 22 June 1959, 130.23/3106/5.
8. See Eytan to Avidan, telegram 110, 25 June 1959, 130.09/2355/11.
9. See Eytan to Avidan and the minister of foreign affairs, telegrams 47-49, 26 June 1959, 130.09/2378/1.
10. See Avidan to the M.F.A., telegram 209, 26 June 1959, 130.23/3106/5.
11. The original is damaged.
12. See Eytan to Avidan and the minister of foreign affairs, telegrams 53-55, 29 June 1959, 130.09/2378/1.
13. The Venezuelan legation did remain in Jerusalem.

480. E. Ben-Horin (Cape Town) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 19 July 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3094/25

Ben-Horin reports on a tour he made with the Israel ambassador in London to the countries of British East Africa. This report is being sent to flesh out his short cabled report.[1,2] The three-week tour included Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Tanganyika. The purpose of the visit was to study the problems in one of the most important regions of Africa, which would be gaining independence in the near future,[4] to make the acquaintance of the African leadership in these states, and to forge ties with them. In each of the states they visited, they held talks with the British governors, ministers, and officials. They also met with the African leaders and public figures, such as those in chambers of commerce, journalists, mayors, and heads of financial institutions. They met with members of the only Jewish community in the region (in Nairobi) and with a number of Jewish individuals.

One of the outstanding factors in the region, and especially in the coastal area, is the strong Muslim, Egyptian and Nasserist influence in these countries. This is expressed through radio broadcasts in Swahili and in the fostering of local leaders who are acting as opposition to the main African

leadership. There is an especially strong influence in Zanzibar, where the local nationalist party openly follows Nasser.

They found a deep interest in Israel everywhere; people generally are aware of its achievements and there is a strong desire to receive aid in the form of training or commercial and economic projects. Interest was expressed in the possibility of African personalities visiting Israel, and a number of invitations, notably to Tom M'boya, were extended.

Notes

1. In this telegram (dated 15 July 1959, in File 130.23/3094/25) there is detailed report on the visit to Tanganyika.
2. In this telegram (15 July 1959, ibid.) there is report on the visit and the following recommendations are made: (1) posting an Israeli commercial attaché in Nairobi, with responsibility for all East Africa; (2) inviting important persons to visit Israel; (3) developing ties between the Histadrut and local trade unions; (4) granting scholarships to advanced students from the region; (5) increasing Israel's propaganda efforts.
3. Israel Somen, the honorary Israeli consul in Nairobi.
4. Kenya became independent in 1963; Uganda, in 1962; Tanganyika, in 1961; and Zanzibar, in 1963. In 1964 the last two federated to form Tanzania.
5. Paragraphs about the British regime and African and Indian nationalism in East Africa have been omitted here.
6. Paragraphs about the trade unions, the educational level in the region, and the economic structure have been omitted here.
7. See n. 2 above.
8. The report, dated 20 July 1959 (in File 130.23/3094/25) includes a survey on the Jews in East Africa, which states that there is only one community, in Nairobi, with about 700 members. The recommendations mentioned in n. 2 above are also presented.

481. Senior Staff Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 3 August 1959).

Copy: 130.02/4315/2

The meeting was attended, apart from the minister of foreign affairs, by the director-general and senior officials.

The minister of foreign affairs opened the meeting with an account of her visit to Latin America. She received a warm welcome everywhere and there is great interest in Israel. Although it would seem that everything is fine, there are tendencies that are dangerous to Israel's status. Arab activities are

being carried out through their diplomatic missions, the Arab League offices, and the local Arab population.[1] There are also signs of Communist subversion.

In Venezuela, the situation is different. There are signs of attempts to find allies among the "oppressed" peoples. Such peoples are found in the Arab Middle East. The bid for Arab support is not only due to joint oil interests, but also due to anti-imperialist tendencies. Arab diplomatic activity is also being carried out there.

The financial situation of the Jews is generally good. Extensive Jewish educational activities exist there. There is fear of antisemitism in all the countries except Argentina and Brazil.

The problem of Jerusalem was raised almost everywhere, but not the issue of the transfer of the legations from Jerusalem.

Conclusions: The existing missions should be strengthened and new ones established in Guatemala, Colombia and Cuba. The information centre for Latin America should be transferred from New York to Buenos Aires.[13]

The question of the sale of arms to these countries was raised at the conference of Israeli diplomatic representatives.[14] A proposal was made to stop the sale of arms of any sort but the representatives did not agree to this; the danger of Israel becoming entangled should always be kept in mind.

Notes

1. There were concentrations of Arabs, most of them of Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian origin, in various places in Latin America. Their ancestors immigrated during the Ottoman period, so the locals call them "Turks."
2. One sentence has been omitted.
3. See No. 479.
4. Josué Lopez Henriquez, the Venezuelan defence minister.
5. Victor Gimenez Landinez, the Venezuelan agriculture minister.
6. Moshe Avidan, the Israel minister in Venezuela.
7. Janio Quadros, president of Brazil from January to August 1961.
8. Raúl Porras Barenechea, foreign minister of Peru.
9. Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes, president of Guatemala.
10. The first Israel ambassador to Guatemala, Joshua N. Shai, submitted his credentials on 29 December 1959. He was also accredited to El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama.
11. In August 1960, Walter Abeles was named the first Israel resident ambassador in Colombia.
12. On the establishment of the Israel legation in Havana, see No. 492 and note 15 there.
13. On 24 August 1959, a consultation about Latin America was held at M.F.A. Eytan proposed posting chargés d'affaires to Havana and Bogotá, while Fischer noted that it would not be possible to move the information center for Latin America from New York to Buenos Aires before April 1960. (See minutes in File 130.02/4315/2.)

14. The reference is to the conference of the heads of Israel missions in Latin America, held in Montevideo at the end of May 1959; see Gazit to Eytan and Fischer, 14 July 1959, 130.23/3092/2.
15. Paragraphs 3 and 4, which deal with the conference of Israel head of missions in Eastern Europe and the report about the refugees by the United Nations secretary-general, have been omitted here.

482. Ch. Yahil (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 5 August 1959

Coded Tel. 359; Outg.: 130.23/3119/60

The Ceylonese have purchased two frigates in Israel and had been preparing to sail them from Eilat to Ceylon.[1] Suddenly they had doubts about this and applied to the United Nations secretary-general in order to inform the U. N. Emergency Force.[2] The secretary-general expressed his doubts as to whether free passage applies to warships. In Cairo the matter has been taken up by the ambassador of Ceylon. Lorch has informed the Government of Ceylon that any acquiescence to Egyptian pressure will only increase Egyptian aggression and that if they play down the matter, the U.A.R. will do likewise. Israel's stand is that neither the U.A.R. nor the U.N. Emergency Force has any authority in this matter. Yahil requests that the ambassador of Ceylon be approached with a request that the U.N. secretary-general not be involved in the affair.[3]

Notes

1. The reference is to the frigates INS *Mivtah* and INS *Miznaq*, which circumnavigated Africa after the Sinai Campaign and docked at Eilat in order to guarantee freedom of passage through the Straits of Tiran. On the affair, see N. Lorch, *Late afternoon* (Hebrew), pp. 246-252.
2. The United Nations Emergency Force was established on the basis of the General Assembly resolution of November 1956 to supervise the cessation of hostilities after the Sinai Campaign.
3. The telegram to Lorch, No. 180, is in File 130.23/3119/60. For fear of complications with the U.A.R., the Ceylonese preferred not to take possession of the frigates in Eilat, as had been planned. The *Mivtah* was handed over to them in September 1959, off the coast of Djibouti, while the *Miznaq* was sailed to Ceylon in April 1960 by the Israel Navy.

483. M. Kidron (Bangkok) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 September 1959

Copy: 130.23/3124/33

Kidron summarizes some facts about the Thai foreign minister, Thanat Khoman, in preparation for a meeting with him at the United Nations General Assembly, where he will lead his country's delegation. Kidron describes him as a candid and credible personality, who always keeps his word. He follows a firm line of not becoming involved in issues that do not affect Thailand directly. He has said to Kidron on more than one occasion that he has a high opinion of Israel because of its achievements and he hopes that friendship will always be maintained between Israel and Thailand, to the same extent that Thailand maintains friendship with Arab states. However, he has undertaken to add a few lines to his address to the Assembly regarding free passage through the Suez Canal, which he believes will be appreciated by Israel. During the course of his stay in the United States he became acquainted with matters concerning Israel and Jewish affairs[2] and he has caused his prime minister[3] to take an interest in Israel's methods of agricultural settlement. Three issues concerning Israel and Thailand are currently being dealt with: a friendship agreement, mutual abolition of visas for persons holding official passports, and the appointment of a representative in Israel.

Notes

1. The first two paragraphs, which have to do with the character and personality of the Thai foreign minister and his general policy, have been omitted here.
2. Thanat Khoman served as the deputy permanent representative at the United Nations and ambassador in Washington until the end of 1958.
3. Sarit Thanarat, prime minister of Thailand.
4. For a report on this meeting, see Kidron to Yahil, 21 August 1959, 130.23/3134/33.
5. One paragraph, about the Thai delegation to the U.N. General Assembly, has been omitted here.

484. Survey of Israel–Burma Relations. [Jerusalem]. September 1959[1]

Copy: 130.23/3096/23

Despite the numerous internal crises that Burma has undergone during the past two years, relations between Israel and Burma have remained firm and have even become stronger during the past year. Israel has endeavoured to maintain friendly ties with both factions of the A.F.P.F.L.,[2] but it appears that Israel's best friends are to be found in military circles and the Socialist Party.

Since the visit to Israel of General Ne Win,[4] the Burmese have made efforts to maintain a balance in their relations with the Arab states. Ne Win is currently on a visit to Egypt and a visit by Nasser to Rangoon is expected.

The survey reports details of technical aid, Burmese training in Israel, economic ties, and joint Israeli-Burmese ventures.

Notes

1. This survey seems to been prepared in advance of President Ben-Zvi's visit to Burma in October 1959. The Foreign Ministry survey from June has not been located.
2. See No. 460 and n. 2 there. This party was established underground in 1944, when Burma was under Japanese occupation. A coalition of various groups and factions, it split apart in early 1958, more for personal and factional than ideological and political reasons. The socialist majority created a party that called itself the "Stable A.F.P.F.L.," while the other faction, which called itself the "Pure A.F.P.F.L.," was centred on Prime Minister U Nu.
3. In the elections held in February 1960, U Nu's faction was victorious, and he returned to the Prime Minister' Office in April. Ne Win retained his post as chief of staff.
4. Ne Win visited Israel in June 1959. On his arrival he declared that his visit represented an opportunity for an unofficial exchange of views with Israeli leaders about issues directly related to relations between the two countries. He did not intend to discuss controversial international problems. On his meeting with Ben-Gurion, see No. 478.

485. Sh. Hillel (Conakry) to Ch. Yahil (Jerusalem). 7 October 1959

Orig.: 130.23/3099/13

Hillel writes about the situation of Israel in Guinea and possibilities in the light of the exchange of correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] It is agreed that Israel should make every possible effort to establish normal relations with Guinea and to gain influence in that country. Success or failure in that country will have an impact on all the countries of French Africa and perhaps even on West Africa. A number of factors constitute obstacles for Israel in this state–the penetration of East European states, the Arab factor given expression during the Casablanca Conference,[2] the decision to hold the Afro-Asian convention in Conakry,[3] and the instability of Guinea. Thus, Israel should exploit any opportunity whatsoever, even if these activities seem to be diffused and haphazard. This is the only possible way of functioning in this country. In Hillel's opinion, Israel should send to Guinea, through the United Nations or by some other method, some twenty Israeli experts with the purpose of paving the way for more efficient activities in the future. This should be seen as an experiment, and after a year a decision can be taken as to whether it should be continued.

Notes

1. In this letter (in File 130.17/1924/17), Aynor replied to the proposal by Hillel (in his letter dated 16 September 1959, ibid.) to send Israeli physicians to Guinea in response to a request by the minister of health. Aynor noted that "our cooperation and assistance policy is conditioned chiefly on the foundation of dispatching experts for a particular and well-defined mission. We are not equipped quantitatively to provide experts for general and nationwide needs of any country whatsoever."
2. The reference is to the conference of the Arab League in Casablanca in September 1959. Sekou Touré sent a delegation to this conference, along with a letter in which he wrote, inter alia, that the free peoples of Africa were fighting on a common front with the Arab peoples and that "the League [is seen] as a living force to which the free peoples of Africa aspire to join their young forces." (See translation of the Note by Sekou Touré, document dated 24 September 1959, 130.23/3099/17.)
3. The conference actually took place in April 1960; see Vol. 14, No. 480.
4. Yahil replied (letter to Hillel, 25 October 1959, 130.23/3099/13) that the M.F.A. did not delude itself that anything major could be accomplished in Guinea, but they were prepared to do more there than they would have done in any other African country. In Ben-Horin's response (30 October 1959, ibid.) he wrote that it had been agreed to make a special effort to comply with the Guinean request about experts and

advanced students because of Israel's "difficult status" in that country. Hillel replied (letter to Ben-Horin, 24 November 1959, ibid.) that various events reinforced his estimation of the pro-Arab and especially pro U.A.R. orientation into which Sekou Touré was swept from time to time. In the margin of this paragraph Golda Meir noted, "he's right".

486. D. Lewin (Rangoon) to E. Ben-Horin (Jerusalem). 14 October 1959

Copy: 130.23/3096/23

He met with Ne Win after his return from Cairo.[1] From the conversation it seems definite to him that the visit has not changed Ne Win's attitude to Israel. The issue of Israeli-Egyptian relations was raised twice during the course of his visit, once when Nasser referred to the success of the Eisenhower–Khrushchev meeting, and again when they saw the vessel *Inge Toft*[3] moored in the harbour. Ne Win exploited the opportunity to propose direct negotiations. Nasser said he was interested in peace, but this could be attained only when the refugee problem was solved. When Ne Win replied that Israel could not absorb the refugees, Nasser stated that there was also the possibility of compensation. As for the matter of the *Inge Toft*, Nasser replied that the issue was not related to the Suez Canal, but rather to the situation of war that existed between his country and Israel. According to Ne Win, Nasser did not even attempt to influence him to annul the good relations existing between Burma and Israel. Ne Win did not attempt to offer his services as an intermediary between the two countries. He suggests that Israel issue a statement regarding the refugees and the issue of compensation. He believes that Nasser's reaction will not be completely negative, even if it is worthwhile examining the matter.

Lewin also raised the matter of Burma's undertaking to issue a statement during the course of the United Nations General Assembly regarding freedom of navigation, an undertaking that was not fulfilled.[2] Ne Win said that he had had no part in the change of instructions and had not been able to follow events due to his travels.

Notes

1. Ne Win left for a visit to Egypt on 25 September 1959. Before his departure he spoke with Lewin and told him that he had asked his hosts to keep the visit modest and not embarrass him by planning visits to military installations. In addition he said that

Nasser had given him to understand that he was adopting a moderate line in his relations with Israel, but the Israelis forced him to act because of their provocations. Among others he noted the Suez affair, in which, he said, Israel was using ships flying a neutral flag but in practice leased to Israel to carry cargoes to Israel, as well as Israel's activities to frustrate a World Bank loan to Egypt for widening the canal. With regard to Suez, Ne Win stated that he agreed that his foreign minister, who was traveling to the United Nations General Assembly, would include something about the canal in his speech, at Israel's request. (See Lewin to Ben-Horin and Yahil, 18 September 1959, 130.23/296/23.)

2. U Thant, the Burmese permanent representative at United Nations, informed the Israel mission that he had received instructions from Rangoon countermanding an earlier instruction to make a statement about the Suez Canal (See Eytan to the Israel embassy in Rangoon, 25 September 1959, 130.09/2361/4.)
3. A Danish vessel that was detained at Port Said in May 1959 while carrying an Israeli cargo destined for the Far East. On the affair, see chapter 3.

487. E. Avriel (Accra) to the Asian and African Division. 31 October 1959

Coded Tel. 213; Inc.: 130.23/3103/11

During his conversation with Nkrumah, the latter apologized profusely for the incident in parliament[1] and added that he is considering ousting the slanderers from his party. He passed on to the issue of the Black Star Shipping Company. He stated that national prestige requires full Ghanaian ownership of its ships and airplanes. He asked for proposals to correct the situation, and invited Avriel to return for a discussion on this matter.

Notes

1. During the debate in the Ghanaian Parliament on 29 October 1959 about ratification of the commercial agreement with Israel, a number of delegates made antisemitic remarks. (See Avriel to the M.F.A., telegram 204, 30 January 1959, 130.23/3103/11.)
2. K. A. Gbedemah, the finance minister of Ghana, apologized in Parliament on 30 October 1959 for the antisemitic remarks made there the day before (telegram 206 to the M.F.A., 30 October 1959, ibid.).
3. At Nkrumah's instructions, the Ghanaian Foreign Ministry warned the U.A.R. ambassador in Accra about the anti-Israeli propaganda being circulated by his embassy (telegram 172, 21 October 1958, ibid.).
4. No report on this meeting has been found, and evidently it never took place. On 20 October, Avriel met with the minister of economics, K. Botsio, who claimed that a problem had arisen regarding Israelis who served on ships of the Black Star

Company that docked in Arab ports, and the problem of the Arab boycott in general. Avriel replied that Israel would insist on fulfillment of the contract, which was for five years. (See Avriel to the minister of foreign affairs, telegram 157, 30 October 1959, 130.09/2291/12.) On 19 October 1960, Zim and the Government of Ghana signed a contract for the purchase by the latter of Zim's share in the partnership. Zim agreed to manage the company until 1967; see Vol. 14, No. 492.

488. E. Najar (Tokyo) to Ch. Yahil (Jerusalem). 5 November 1959

Copy: 130.23/3104/31

Najar writes about Sapir's visit to Japan.[1] The visit was successful and the meetings with the foreign minister and the minister of trade were positive and courteous. However, despite this, he suggests that an over-optimistic view of Israeli-Japanese relations would be out of place. The Arabs are increasingly active and have successfully introduced the concept of the Arab boycott. Recently, car manufacturers have refused to trade with Israel and the Nissan Company has even signed a specific undertaking not to trade with Israel. Nor should it be forgotten that Japan's refusal to raise the level of its legation to an embassy still applies. On the other hand, he wishes to point out that the government is not involved in the boycott, and the apprehension of trading with Israel is confined to commercial companies. The government would not object to establishing commercial or industrial relations between Japanese and Israeli firms, and ways must be found to contact firms that are not involved in trade with the Arabs.

Notes

1. The reference is to a visit to Tokyo by Pinhas Sapir to participate in the GATT conference.
2. These telegrams have not been located, except for that from Najar to Yahil, telegram 735, 23 October 1959 (File 130.09/3315/10), in which he reports that Foreign Minister Fujiyama and Trade Minister Ikeda had told Sapir that they were in favour of the development of economic relations between Japan and Israel.
3. The appendix has not been found. On Japan's capitulation to the Arab boycott, see chapter 4, Nos. 117 and 118.

489. M. Yuval (Sydney) to the Asian and African Division. 10 November 1959

Copy: 130.23/3111/14

Yuval reports on his meeting at a reception with the prime minister of Malaya, Abdul Rahman, during his visit to Australia. The prime minister recalled his meeting with Moshe Sharett in 1956[1] and said that he continues to take an interest in Israel and its development. When they were alone for a short time, the prime minister stated that the leadership of Malaya is well aware of the character of Israel but the Muslim populace is against diplomatic relations and therefore it is impossible to forge ties. Yuval replied that the leadership could surely bring its influence to bear on the populace in a just cause or for the benefit of the country. The conversation was cut short when other members of his party returned.[2]

Notes

1. In October 1956. See Moshe Sharett, *An Asian Tour* (Hebrew), pp. 101-105.
2. Ben-Horin replied that the remarks by the prime minister of Malaya were interesting and important and seemed to open the door to request another meeting with him. He added a briefing for such a meeting. (See Ben-Horin to Yuval, telegram 306, 19 November 1959, 130.23/3111/14.) The telegram was not received until after the prime minister had left Australia.

490. E. Avriel (Accra) to the Asian and African Division. 13 November 1959

Coded Tel. 278; Inc.: 130.23/3103/1

He was summoned to Nkrumah who made the following statement: he has come to the conclusion that Ghana's main problems lie in the areas of health, education, and agriculture. Israel is the only country that can genuinely assist in these areas. In the past he has been mistaken in his attitude toward Israel when accusing it of identifying with France and when he was influenced by Arab incitement against Israel and made frequent visits to Cairo. In the light of these conclusions he requests that Israel make available three persons who would have unlimited powers to control the country's education, health, and agriculture. In exchange he is prepared to

draw up a political program with Israel which would present to the world his attitude to Israel and would provide an outstanding example of a true and bold expression of international cooperation. Avriel replied that he would pass on this request to Israel with his full support. Furthermore, he proposed that steps be taken to demonstrate and emphasize the cooperation between the two countries.

Avriel recommends that Nkrumah's requests be met. These connections would strengthen Israel's standing in Africa. The experts would be required for a period of two years. He lists the names of three candidates he suggests for these tasks. He requests a speedy reply.[2]

Notes

1. On Israel's position at the UN General Assembly on Algeria and French nuclear tests in the Sahara, see the introduction, p. li.
2. Ben-Gurion replied that he was "absolutely in favour" of satisfying Nkrumah's request; see his telegram to Avriel, telegram 86, 17 November 1959, 130.23/3103/21. See also No. 491.

491. Asian and African Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Accra. 16 November 1959

Coded Tel. 84; Outg.: 130.23/3103/11

The Division sends a message from the minister of foreign affairs to Nkrumah in reply to his request for experts.[1] Israel will seek the best persons available and send them to Ghana, but there is no doubt that the miracle of the development of Ghana and its rapid progress can only be brought about by the Ghanaians themselves. She attaches the utmost importance to the establishment of a "Builders' Brigade"[2] that would undertake pioneering projects in Ghana.[3]

Notes

1. No. 490.
2. An organization like the Israeli Nahal (military units sent to establish agricultural outposts in border regions), set up by Israeli mentors in Ghana, under the name the "Builders' Brigade".
3. Avriel passed on this message to Nkrumah, who asked that the three experts advance the date of their arrival as much as possible (see Avriel to the minister of foreign affairs, telegram 293, 23 November 1959, 130.23/3103/11). The experts arrived in Ghana in 1960.

492. Latin America Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Buenos Aires. 22 November 1959

Coded Tel. 508; Outg.: 130.23/3121/25

The cable is addressed to Joel Barromi, first secretary in the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires. The Latin America Division reviews the question of Israel's relations with the new regime in Cuba.[1] The conclusion is that since there has been no progress in creating ties and in light of Cuba's close relations with the U.A.R. and the Afro-Asian bloc as well as Castro's tendency to appear as a pioneering revolutionary in Latin America, it is incumbent upon Israel to make every effort to improve its relations with Cuba through constant contacts with its government and through the provision of basic information about Israel. Thus, the minister of foreign affairs has decided to appoint Mr. Barromi as chargé d'affaires in Cuba in order to maintain daily contacts and to activate the legation that existed there in theory.[15]

Notes

1. Israel recognized the revolutionary government in Cuba in early January 1959.
2. An international agricultural conference was held in Israel in April 1959.
3. See his telegram to the M.F.A., X952, 18 February 1959, 130.23/3121/25.
4. See the M.F.A. to the Israel Legation in Mexico, 8 March 1959, 130.09/2328/9.
5. See Shealtiel to the M.F.A., 20 April 1959, 130.23/3121/35.
6. In the summer of 1959, a Cuban delegation headed by Che Guevara, one of Castro's intimates, visited the United Arab Republic and other countries in Africa and Asia, as well as Yugoslavia.
7. See Tekoah to the M.F.A. , X346, 27 June 1959, 130.09/2334/7.
8. See Shaltiel to the M.F.A., telegram 240, 21 June 1959, 130.09/2228/10.
9. See Amir to the M.F.A., telegram 253, 18 September 1959, 130.09/2328/10.
10. See the minutes of the meeting, taken by Darom, 25 September 1959, 130.23/3121/55.
11. The meeting took place several days earlier; see Darom to the minister of foreign affairs and others, 8 December 1959, ibid.
12. See Amir to the M.F.A., telegram 266, 6 November 1959, 130.09/2328/10.
13. See Amir to the M.F.A., telegram 271, 12 November 1959, ibid.
14. ORIT, the Organización Regional Inter-Americana del Trabajo (Interamerican regional labour organization), with headquarters in Mexico, included mainly unions affiliated with Socialist parties.
15. Until Barromi's arrival, Israel had no permanent representation in Cuba. The minister (later ambassador) in Mexico was accredited to Cuba as non-resident minister.

493. Director of the Asian and African Division (Jerusalem) to M. Michael (Bombay).[1] 30 November 1959

Copy: 130.23/3101/5

Ben-Horin reacts to Michael's report on his meetings in New Delhi.[2] He found his comments most interesting and at times they were justified. There is no doubt that the Indian journalists are correct in stating that they will not make the matter of relations with Israel an issue on which to attack the government, because, despite the freedom of the press, they need to maintain good relations with the government. There is no benefit to pursuing a controversy in India and it would be best to concentrate on the change of atmosphere in conversations that should be held with moderation and tact. The Indians are justified in requesting that Israel not carry out a propaganda war with the Arabs on their soil. The consulate's publications should be adapted to this spirit. They should concentrate on quiet positive information. The complaints made by the persons to whom Michael had spoken, saying that Nehru could not be influenced, are also justified. Public opinion should be prepared for the day, sooner or later, when the leadership will be changed.

Finally, Ben-Horin reiterated the standing order for all Israeli diplomatic representatives that the issue of ties between the two countries should not be raised. The Indians are aware of Israel's stand on this matter, and there is no point in raising this matter time and again.

Notes

1. M. Michael was appointed Israel consul in Bombay in October 1959.
2. The reference is to the letter from Michael to Ben-Horin, dated 28 November 1959, in which he reports on talks in New Delhi with journalists and external ministry officials. They had said, inter alia, that it should not be assumed that Nehru was truly interested in relations with Israel. The letter is in file 130.23/3101/5.)
3. K. S. Bajpai, head of the Middle East desk in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.
4. The rest of the letter is missing.

494. M. Michael [Bombay] to E. Ben-Horin (Jerusalem). 5 December 1959

Copy: 130.23/3101/5

Michael reports on his meetings in India. In his meetings with two senior officials in the Ministry of External Affairs, Bajpai and Coelho, responsible for Middle East affairs, he learned, if one can judge from the import of what they had to say, that the ministry wishes to establish full relations, but that in the meantime Israel should not be impatient with them, and they will try to gain Israel's sympathy without antagonizing Nehru. In his conversation with Tandon, deputy director-general of the ministry, the latter complained about Israeli publications that have brought a reaction from the U.A.R. He explained that a consulate does not have the same rights for dissemination of information as those enjoyed by an embassy, and more than he fears the reaction of the Arabs, he is apprehensive of actions of China in India resulting from Israeli activities. He did not express any objection to Michael visiting Delhi and carrying out his activities there. Michael had a short meeting with Dutt,[5] the director-general of the Ministry of External Affairs and they have set another meeting.

He has had frank conversations with members of the Congress Party. He heard from them dreadful antisemitic expressions of the type he thought no longer existed. He rebuked them and a purposeful discussion ensued. He is convinced that Israel's main information activities should be concentrated among these people.

It is essential that members of this organization visit Israel. The problem is that their fares will have to be paid. He already has a number of candidates for this visit.[7]

Notes

1. It is not known what matter is being referred to here.
2. In March 1960 Michael was given the personal rank of consul-general.
3. Tandon, the deputy director-general of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.
4. The Praja Socialist Party was founded in 1952 by the merger of the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party.
5. S. Dutt, the external secretary (director-general) of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.
6. Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, served as her father's official hostess.
7. For Ben-Horin's reply, see No. 495.

495. E. Ben-Horin (Jerusalem) to M. Michael (Bombay). 28 December 1959

Copy: 130.23/3101/5

Ben-Horin replies to a number of letters from Michael.[1,2,3] He agrees that India should not become the arena for a propaganda battle with the Arabs. Contacts with the Congress Party are important and these must be strengthened, but this must be done while taking into consideration Mapai's ties with the Indian Socialist Party. Israel is certainly willing to invite a number of editors of the leading newspapers in India and finance will be provided for this purpose. Finally he requests that the issue of the transfer of the Israeli consulate to Delhi not be raised, because this has been proposed by Israel in the past and has not been accepted. If the Indians raise this matter unofficially, the reply should be that Israel will be prepared to request the transfer only if an explicit undertaking is given that its request will be accepted.

Notes

1. No. 494.
2. The letter is in File 130.23/3101/5. Michael reported on his meetings with journalists, External Ministry officials, and figures in the regime during his visit to New Delhi.
3. In the letter (ibid.) it is stated, inter alia, that the issue that engages Nehru is the summit conference and the ordering of world affairs through it. Michael also enumerated considerations for and against moving the Israeli consulate from Bombay to New Delhi.
4. No. 493.

496 J. Barromi (Havana) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 31 December 1959

Coded Tel. 6; Inc.: 130.09/2304/8

Barromi reports on his interview with the president of Cuba. He conveyed Israel's desire to participate in the conference of developing countries[1] and mentioned that Israel is interested in a visit by a delegation of agriculturists. The president promised his assistance in these matters. In his meeting with the deputy foreign minister, Barromi expressed Israel's concern that Israel

has not been mentioned in a number of demonstrations of support for the peoples of the Middle East. He reiterated Israel's demand for free navigation. The deputy foreign minister stated that Cuba sympathises with Israel and that a minister will be appointed by the end of January. The conference is being held under the auspices of the United Nations and will be open to all developing countries.

Barromi points out that he has received information from Darom who is also troubled. Roa has disregarded promises in the past. He requests that this information be passed on to Darom who might meet Roa in Belgrade.[4]

Notes

1. According to this telegram (dated 30 December 1959, in File 130.09/2304/7), it was assumed that Darom had told Barromi that the Cuban foreign minister had told him on 8 December that the government of Cuba intended to convene a conference of developing countries and asked about Israel's position regarding the initiative. Darom replied that its position was favourable and that it looked forward to an official invitation from Cuba. (See Darom to the M.F.A., X863, 9 December 1959, in File 120.23/3121/25.)
2. See No. 492.
3. The first minister of revolutionary Cuba in Israel, Ricardo Subirana y Lobo, presented his credentials on 1 September 1960.
4. Darom served as Israel minister in Belgrade and came to New York to serve as a member of the Israel delegation to the 14th United Nations General Assembly. No documentation has been found of his meeting with Roa in Belgrade and it seems likely that the meeting never took place.

497. M. Shneerson (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 January 1958

Coded Tel. 823; Inc.: 130.09/2348/3

Easterman has reported on his meetings in Morocco.[1,2] He met with Si Bekkai, Bouabid, Laghzoui and Benzaquen. Laghzoui stressed that he has no objection to granting passports without discrimination to Jews wishing to leave Morocco, conditional upon a decision being taken in Cabinet on this issue. Bouabid also supports issuing passports on condition that the numbers be restricted to 500-600 per month and no action be taken to organize mass emigration. Si Bekkai undertook to bring the matter before the Cabinet as soon as possible. Benzaquen has demanded in Cabinet meetings that a solution be found for the emigration of Jews to Israel and

has threatened to resign if the obstacles are not removed. Easterman is optimistic and intends to return to Morocco to continue talks.[3] In his opinion a central body should be set up or a person appointed in Morocco to guide the immigrants, but the Moroccans strongly object to this. His proposal is first to complete the negotiations on immigration and only then to deal with the issue of centralization and guidance.

Notes

1. The visit was the continuation of talks about immigration to Israel conducted in December 1957 in the United States between representatives of the World Jewish Congress, headed by Nahum Goldmann, and King Muhammad V of Morocco and his entourage. According to Goldmann, the Moroccans agreed to allow 500-600 Jews to leave each month, on condition that the Jewish Agency and similar bodies not be involved in organizing the emigration and that illegal emigration be halted. (See Israel consulate general in New York to Eytan and Harman, 3 December 1957, 536, 130.09/2338/25.)
2. The full report on the visit to Morocco, which took place between 7 and 17 January, is in File 130.23/3113/13II.
3. This visit was in fact made only in April, and ended with no results; see No. 502.
4. Dr. Benjamin Reisel, an Israeli physician who was sent to Morocco to examine candidates for immigration. In practice he did not do so, but devoted his time to establishing an organization to encourage Morocco Jews to immigrate to Israel. In December 1957, Reisel was arrested along with a number of immigration activists, after a search of their car found forged Moroccan passports. He was released a few months later.
5. On the meeting, see the Israel embassy in Paris to the M.F.A., 850, 22 January 1958, 130.09/2348/3. Easterman emphasized at the meeting that it was essential to refrain from illegal immigration from Morocco until the conclusion of the negotiations he was intending to conduct in Morocco.

498. K. Katz (Warsaw) to Sh. Bendor (Prague). 19 February 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3118/4

Katz replies to Bendor's query[1] as to why Poland's policy toward Israel is less rigid than that of the other countries of the Eastern bloc. Katz explains that in fact there has been no any fundamental change in Poland's policy, which in general follows that of the Soviet Union, but that it exploits, as much as possible, the leeway the Soviet Union allowed its satellites. Poland also follows this line in its internal and international policies. These are differences in style rather than intrinsic differences, and this is in keeping

with the desire that has existed since the 20th convention of the Communist Party to present an appearance of greater independence of the other Soviet bloc states. Immigration to Israel is included within the latitude that the Soviet Union allows its satellites but due to an attitude of zealousness, the latter has taken a more strictured attitude. There have to be extremely good reasons for any East European state to permit emigration. In Poland such reasons exist, and they have resulted in the taking of a more lenient line toward the German minority of almost two hundred thousand, who have been permitted to join their German brethren. The Poles are aware that they would not be able to explain why they have forbidden Jews to do what they have allowed the Germans. Like the Germans, the Jews are an element that cannot be assimilated. To this should be added a certain attempt to salve their conscience on their attitude to the Jews during the war. Hence they have permitted emigration of Jews to Israel. At first this included returning Jewish repatriates from the Soviet Union, but after the latter protested, they allowed the emigration of Polish Jews only. Katz concludes with the suggestion that this situation should be exploited while it exists because the Poles could stop the flow at any moment if they fear that immigration to Israel could create an atmosphere that could be detrimental to their interests.

Notes

1. In his letter (dated 13 December 1957, 130.23/3118/18), Bendor asked Katz to explain why Poland's policy toward the Jews was different from that of the other countries of the Eastern bloc.
2. See No. 504.
3. Bulgaria halted immigration in June 1957, but allowed it to resume in November of that year, although on a much smaller scale.

499. The Israel Minister in Bucharest to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Director of the East European Division. 8 March 1958

Coded Tel. 68; Inc.: 130.09/2297/7

Harel reports on his meeting with the secretary-general of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A government statement was read to him stating that the Romanian government is aware that members of the Israel

legation are distributing money to Romanian Jews to encourage them to immigrate to Israel and to set up a network for the illegal distribution of propaganda materials for this purpose. The secretary-general stressed that because of the improvement of relations between the countries he does not intend to take drastic steps, but is bringing the matter to the attention of the minister in the hope that these activities will cease. The minister denied the accusations.

Harel points out that he is aware that some of these accusations have come from a local employee in the legation, and it appears that he has no choice but to dismiss this employee. He requests the Foreign Ministry's reaction.[3]

Notes

1. In early March, the minister reported the arrest of one of the "distributors"—evidently a local Jew who distributed food packages sent by outside sources. (See telegram to the director of the East European Division, 62, 5 March 1958, 130.09/2297/7.)
2. The secretary-general (director-general) of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Maznicencu.
3. In response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed that the minister request a meeting with the secretary-general of the Romanian foreign ministry and say that he had investigated the charges and found them to be without foundation (see Shimoni to the Israel legation in Bucharest, 643, 10 March 1958, 130.09/2297/6). Harel replied that is his opinion Maznicencu was not the person to speak to, because "he's devoid not only of all influence, but also of all knowledge about the real factors that led to the government announcement, and serves only as a postal drop for another ministry." (See Harel to the M.F.A., 74, 12 March 1958, 130.09/2297/7.) Nevertheless Harel did have another meeting with Maznicencu, at which he read out to him the Israeli response to the allegations (the text of the statement has not been found). Maznicencu replied that he understood Harel's statement to be a declaration that in the future legation staff would not be involved in activities that were not incompatible with the nature of diplomatic activity. (See Harel to Shimoni, Telegram 89, 23 March 1958, 130.23/3123/17.)

500. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister. 16 March 1958

Copy: 130.23/3101/26

Shimoni reviews for the prime minister the situation of immigration to Israel from Hungary.[1,2] On 1 June 1957 the Hungarians demanded "compensa-

tion" from Israel for the damage caused them, as they claimed, from activities connected to immigration to Israel. When this matter has been rectified, they stated, emigration would be resumed under the same conditions as had existed up to May 1957.

Since the above demand was made, negotiations between the two countries have continued, in the course of which the Hungarians have agreed to accept Israeli goods worth dollars in credit, which will be returned in Hungarian goods. The dispute is now over the duration of the credit and Israel's latest proposal is to grant periodic credits that will be renewed from time to time. Such a system of credit will enable Israel to examine the manner in which the Hungarian undertaking is being implemented, and to link the duration of the credit to the actual continuation of immigration to Israel.[3]

Notes

1. In a note dated 1 June 1957, the Israel legation in Budapest was accused of smuggling to Israel foreign currency and jewellery that belonged to immigrants. It was alleged that this had caused $3.5 million in damage to the Hungarian economy. Until this sum was returned, the note stated, immigration would be curtailed to the level of the first half of 1956. (See Tuval to the M.F.A., 7 June 1957, 130.23/3101/35.)
2. On 3 November 1956, the Hungarian government announced its consent to free emigration by Jews who expressed a desire to leave the country. These Jews would receive passports, according to Hungarian procedure, on the basis of pre-visas they would receive from the Israel legation.
3. After the negotiations on the matter reached a dead end, it was decided in Israel to transfer the handling of immigration from Hungary to Nativ, the government agency involved in immigration from Eastern Europe. Evidently the present document was prepared for Ben-Gurion as the official responsible for Nativ. See also 506.

501. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Israel Minister in Warsaw. 18 April 1958

Copy: 130.23/3118/18

The decrease in numbers of persons registering in Poland for immigration to Israel and the actual number of immigrants arriving is disturbing. The explanation given by the minister that the decline is a result of the weakening of the desire of Polish Jews to leave is doubted in Israel and there are those who believe that the Poles are making emigration more difficult. In

the course of a conversation with Shragai, the latter pointed out the difference between the numbers requesting to emigrate and the actual number of immigrants, and he presumes that this derives from obstacles raised by the Polish government. He requests the minister's evaluation of this.[1]

Note

1. No response to this telegram has been found. On the reduction of immigration from Poland, see Introduction, p. lv.

502. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 22 April 1958

Coded Tel. 402; Inc.: 130.23/3113/13II

From Easterman's report on his return from Morocco it appears that no progress has been made in negotiations and there is no hope of any.[1] Among the reasons are the difficulties in forming a government and the more extremist character expected of it. In his opinion, because of this situation there is no point in continuing the delay in [illegal] immigration to Israel that had been agreed upon.

Note

1. See No. 497. The full report on the visit, dated 14 April 1958, is in File 130.23/3113/9. D. Assael was the representative in Paris of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency.

503. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Fischer (Jerusalem). 3 September 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3103/26

Tsur criticizes the methods and approach of the World Jewish Congress in North Africa. They advocate diplomatic activities, oppose publicity, and object to any overt and energetic activities there. They claim the independent illegal emigration will endanger the emigration of Jews and demand that immigration to Israel be carried out on an agreed basis. They objected to the

involvement of American Jews during the visit of the king of Morocco to the United States, and as a result of this stand and the pressure brought to bear by the State Department, an opportunity to activate public opinion was missed. Now, a new problem has arisen, and this is Tunisia. The Bourguiba government is doing all in its power to repress any vestige of cultural autonomy and is making difficulties for the activities of Jewish educational institutions. In Tsur's opinion, the free immigration to Israel of Tunisian Jews is in danger and the methods being used should be revised as follows:

To take immigration and handling the Jews of North Africa out of the hands of the World Jewish Congress.

These activities should be dealt with by Israel government institutions and the Zionist Movement.

An independent institution should be set up to deal with these activities and this should be it sole function—similar to the institution that deals with emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe.

The situation in these countries should be well publicized in the United States and contacts be made with the representatives of the Maghreb countries there.

Visits to these countries by personalities from the United States and Europe to take up the issues with the heads of government should be initiated.

Efforts should be made to attain the intervention of international organizations, such as the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, etc.

He submits these proposals for consideration and awaits their opinion.[6]

Notes

1. On 18 February 1958, two emissaries of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency, Jacob Hassan and Rafael Ben-Gera, were kidnapped in Algeria. Efforts to rescue them were in vain and they were murdered by the kidnappers. (For a summary of the affair, see the M.F.A. to Israel missions Abroad, Ministry Circular 201, 19 August 1958, 130.09/2378/8.)
2. See Nos. 497 and 502.
3. See No. 497 and n. 1 there.
4. This contradicts to what was said by the United States ambassador in Tunisia; see No. 507.
5. The object of the reference is not known.
6. No reply to this letter has been found. In any case, an independent agency to handle immigration from Morocco, as proposed by Tsur, was not set up. Responsibility for organizing the immigration of Jews from North Africa remained with the World Jewish Congress.

504. Israel Minister in Bucharest to the Director of the East European Division. 26 September 1958

Coded Tel. 264; Inc.: 130.09/2297/7

Harel reports on a meeting at the Romanian Foreign Ministry which was cordial and friendly. He was told that the new line is not fortuitous but will continue until the entire problem has been solved.[1] The persons he met with refrained from a general definition of the framework of immigration to Israel or the groups permitted to leave, but agreed to deal with a number of issues such as publications in the press about this immigration. They accepted Harel's explanations that the hostile attacks that appeared in the Romanian press resulted from provocation by elements wishing to sabotage immigration to Israel. Harel has found out that following this meeting the pace of distribution of registration forms for immigration to Israel among Jews had been speeded up. These are not passports but the first stage before receiving them.

Note

1. On 10 August, Harel reported that the pace of immigration from Romania had increased. He added that he had no logical explanation for this change. (See Harel to Levavi and Shimoni, 205, 130.09/2297/7.) On 22 September he reported that, after Romanian Jews had not been allowed submit new requests for family reunification since March, government offices had again begun accepting such requests during the last week. (See Harel to the M.F.A., telegram 211, ibid.)

505. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 3 October 1958

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2378/8

The situation of the Jews in Morocco is at its worst. Some 200,000 Jews live there without any possibility of leaving. There is a great desire to leave, but this is not possible. The government is becoming increasingly radical and Morocco's joining the Arab League[1] does not augur well. The situation of the Jews in Morocco should be brought to the attention of the general public as well as the Jewish community, since attempts to bring influence to bear through diplomatic channels has failed.[2] This is followed by a description of the situation of the Jews in Morocco.

Notes

1. Morocco joined the Arab League in October 1958.
2. See No. 502.

506. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Budapest. 24 October 1958

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2295/12

Shimoni informs the chargé d'affaires in Budapest[1] that the secret negotiations on immigration of Jews from Hungary to Israel have been successful.[2] The Hungarian authorities are planning to make a public announcement about this at a ceremony at their Foreign Ministry, and the Israel minister in Vienna would arrive for this occasion. If any practical question should arise during the course of the ceremony, it should be stated that the query will be passed on to the Israel government.[4]

Notes

1. Lou Kaddar, chargé d'affaires of Israel in Budapest.
2. See No. 500 and n. 3 there.
3. Yeshayahu Dan, one of the heads of Nativ.
4. Szarka, a Hungarian deputy foreign minister, participated in the meeting and stated that all misunderstandings had been eliminated in the wake of the agreement. There would be no further discrimination against Jews who wished to immigrate to Israel. (See L. Kaddar to the M.F.A., telegram 943, 31 October 1959, 130.09/2295/14.)

507. J. Herzog (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 November 1958

Coded Tel. W455; Inc.: 130.09/2313/7

In an off-the-record conversation with the United States ambassador to Tunisia,[1] the latter complained about Jewish emissaries from the United States, England and France who visit Tunis from time to time to examine non-existent problems and are annoying Bourguiba.[4] According to him, arrangements for the emigration of Jews are working well[3] and there is no

intention of impairing even when Tunisia joined the Arab League.[2] Herzog gave his explanations, but the ambassador reiterated that if difficulties arise it is preferable to deal with them through the State Department or the French Foreign Ministry. He stated that Bourguiba has told him that he has succeeded in introducing a balanced policy toward the Jews as an integral part of his party's policy. He does not regret the existence of Israel, but its establishment caused tension in the Middle East. In discussions on development, the Israeli model was cited by Tunisian officials. Herzog reports that the ambassador will remain in the United States another few weeks and that if the Ministry wishes to bring any matter to his attention, he should be informed.[5]

Notes

1. G. Lewis Jones, the United States ambassador to Tunisia.
2. In October 1958.
3. That is, maintaining an office of the Jewish Agency in Tunis and no interference with immigration as long as it was run quietly.
4. Among the visitors, Easterman, who was in Tunisia in September-October 1958, met with Bourguiba and heard him say that Tunisia's membership in the Arab League would not have an unfavourable impact on immigration. (A report on the visit is in File 130.23/3103/26.)
5. No reply has been found.

508. L. Kaddar (Budapest) to the East European Division. 18 November 1958

Orig.: 130.23/3102/5

Kaddar reviews the situation of immigration of Jews from Hungary since the agreement of 1 November on this issue. The government is keeping its part of the agreement, treating those applying courteously. However, the latter have heard various comments from some officials, such as that permission to emigrate will be granted only to those over the age of 55. It is clear that the government is trying to discourage Jews from applying to leave and two articles in the Jewish press are proof of this. On the other hand, the Jews on their part are not showing great enthusiasm. Families who have in the past expressed their desire to immigrate are taking practical steps, but with others it is only theoretical. In short, the picture is gloomy,

but patience is required and it is to be presumed that when the first passports are issued, this will energize those considering immigration.[2]

Notes

1. This telegram has not been found and evidently was sent to Nativ.
2. In a telegram summarizing the first month of legal immigration, Lou Kaddar reported that about 40 persons came to the legation each day, and that about 80% of them inquired about immigration; some 250 had expressed a desire to immigrate to Israel, but it was possible that the number was even larger because there were requests whose submitters had not appeared personally at the legation. (See Kaddar to the M.F.A., Telegram 957, 130.09/2295/14.)

509. Israel Minister in Bucharest to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the East European Division. 17 December 1958

Coded Tel. 368; Inc.: 130.09/2297/7

A surprising change has come about in the organization of immigration to Israel. The passports are now being sent by the Foreign Ministry to the Israel legation in bulk, and the holder of the passport is not required to come to the legation to receive the visa in person. The Romanian government has undertaken to carry out the medical examination and to arrange transit visas. They claim that they wish to assist the immigrants, but it would seem that the authorities want to prevent contact between the immigrants and the legation. A conversation with the director of the consular division has not succeeded in changing this new procedure. He requests instructions how to act, because according to this new procedure the immigrants will not be able to come to the legation, and the legation will be unable to finance their travel. As a result at least 30% of the potential immigrants will lose their passports because of the lack of means.[2]

Notes

1. At this meeting, Harel was unable to ward off the evil decree (see Harel to the M.F.A., telegram 371, 18 December 1958, 130.09/2297/7).
2. In reply, the M.F.A. stated that it would attach visas to the 197 passports that had already been submitted and would say nothing about the passports waiting at the Romanian Foreign Ministry. It was also suggested that he meet with the foreign

minister. (See Shimoni to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 980, 19 December 1958, 130.09/2297/6.) Harel was unable to obtain a meeting with the foreign minister, but in a meeting with one of his deputies he was told that Romania had proposed the new procedure in order to accelerate immigration and make things easier for immigrants and changes could not be made. (See Harel to the M.F.A., telegram 383, 22 December 1958, 130.09/2297/7.)

510. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to the Israel Representatives Abroad. 11 January 1959

Stencilled circular: 130.02/4321/7

The minister of foreign affairs brings to the urgent attention of the Israel representatives abroad the difficult situation regarding immigrants' absorption. It is believed that in 1959 immigration to Israel will reach the figure of about 100,000, mainly from Romania, where the numbers are increasing to 5,000–8,000 per month, and from other countries such as Poland, where it is reaching about 200 per month. The situation regarding absorption of these immigrants is most serious, for the budget provides for housing for 40,000 immigrants only and it will be necessary to accommodate them in temporary structures. The Minister requests the representatives to advise the heads of the United Jewish Appeal and the Bonds in their country of service of this grave situation and ask them to declare a state of emergency to deal with it.

511. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 25 February 1959

Coded Tel. 522; Inc.: 130.09/2297/11

Bendor refers to the declarations in the Israeli press about the reactions of the Arabs to the increased immigration from Romania.[1,2] These reactions have caused the Romanian government to issue an official statement regarding this immigration that includes a virulent attack on Israel and expressions of friendship with the Arab states. It contains an explanation to the effect that permission for this immigration was not given as part of an agreement between Romania and Israel, but for humanitarian reasons only. The statement does not refer to any intention to stop this immigration.

Notes

1. At the end of January, the director-general of the Ministry of Defence, Shimon Peres, declared that immigration improved the security situation of the country and helped deter Arab countries from aggression. "If Israel reached a population of three to four million and could mobilize a large army no Arab country would dare attack it". (*Davar*, 1 February 1959). Ben-Gurion, for his part, said that the most important thing that had happened in the last two years (1957-1958) was the growth in immigration from Eastern Europe. "The immigration [from Romania] keeps increasing and we may hope, to the best our knowledge, not for thousands but for tens of thousands, and perhaps even larger numbers" (ibid., 11 February 1959).
2. Nasser and the Arab League were about to protest to the Soviet Union about the resumption of immigration from Eastern Europe to Israel. Egyptian diplomats noted that "the new wave of immigrants is the most severe threat to peace since the time of the 1948 war." A similar protest was about to be submitted to Romania. (*Davar*, 13 February 1959; Y. Govrin, *Israel-Soviet Relations* [Hebrew], p. 140).
3. Not found.

512. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to the East European Division. 25 February 1959

Coded Tel. 524; Inc.: 130.09/2297/11

Bendor expresses some thoughts on the Romanian statement.[1] The publicity in Israel and abroad, while perhaps unavoidable, has brought reactions from the Arabs and the Romanians have been forced to deny that there has been any change in their attitude to the Arab countries or that some sort of agreement exists between Romania and Israel. In the light of this, any hint at an agreement between Israel and Romania must be avoided. It is to be expected that pressure on the Jews not to visit the Israel legation will be increased that there will be greater surveillance of the Israeli staff, and perhaps even the expulsion of a member of the Israel legation. However, with the stress by the Romanians on the humanitarian aspect, it does not seem that they intend to stop immigration to Israel. Care must be taken to act intelligently and Israel's reaction to the Romanian statement should be moderate and restrained.

Notes

1. See No. 511.
2. See No. 528.

513. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 16 March 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 570; Outg.: 130.09/2378/1

Eytan explains to the missions abroad the background to the Romanian declaration regarding immigration to Israel.[2] The government of Romania permitted immigration to Israel for strong internal reasons.[1] These reasons still exist, and have become even stronger as a result of the fact that numerous Jews are in the process of winding up their affairs in Romania and no longer have any source of income. On the other hand, the publicity, and especially the anti-Romanian aspect of it, has made a strong impact and Arab pressure has had its effect. In the light of this, silence should be observed, the cessation of immigration not be denied, and no publicity be given to any group of Jews leaving Romania. These considerations should be explained secretly to Jewish leaders in their countries of service.

Notes

1. See No. 504.
2. See No. 511 (the communiqué was actually published on 25 February).

514. Y. R. Yaron (Budapest) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 April 1959

Coded Tel. 10; Inc.: 130.09/2296/2

Yaron reports on a conversation he had with Szarka of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he was warned about Israel's failure to comply with commitments and payments in the agreement. Szarka stressed that no undertaking has been given as regards numbers, but only to the principle, and that they on their part are fulfilling their commitment. He stressed that they are doing their utmost within the framework of reunification of families and undertook to reexamine the list that has been submitted. He added that he personally will intervene in humanitarian cases and said that they are resolved to improve relations. He stated their desire to expand commercial ties. Yaron sums up that he was impressed with the sincerity of these statements. Non-compliance with the agreement would bring about an immediate cessation of immigration and deterioration in

relations. In his opinion, a slight increase in immigration could be expected in the next few days and the payment should be made at the beginning of May.

Notes

1. See No. 506.
2. In other words, a wireless transmission station in the legation.
3. The Hungarian secret police.
4. This letter has not been found.

515. M. Gazit (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 14 April 1959

Coded Tel. 770; Outg.: 130.09/2349/3

The cable is addressed to Easterman who is about to leave for Morocco. In the course of deliberations in Israel a number of directives and suggestions have been drawn up as follows:

The main aim is to renew talks regarding implementation of the agreement to allow immigration of 500 to 600 persons per month.[1] One of the arguments to be raised in the talks is the situation in Tangier,[2] which is characteristic of the denial of free emigration. The recent arrests[3] should be used as proof of the desperate situation of the Jews. It should be argued that the only path open to the government of Morocco is to come to an arrangement with a responsible Jewish organization that would guarantee free and legal emigration. This is the only way to allay the situation and to convince public opinion world wide that the government of Morocco keeps its commitments regarding freedom of movement. Such an arrangement will put an end to the hysteria existing among large sectors of the Moroccan Jewish community. It is to be expected that the people to whom Easterman speaks will raise complaints about the activities of various Jewish groups in the area of emigration from Morocco during the past year. The reply should stress that the best way to deal with this is to find a reasonable solution that will put an end to such activities.

Notes

1. See No. 497.

2. The city of Tangier had international status and accordingly served as a port of departure for illegal emigration. At the end of 1956 Morocco annexed Tangier, but the city continued to serve as a port of departure for immigrants to Israel. At the start of 1959, about 800 Jews in transit to Israel were staying there. (See Gazit to Shneerson, telegram 776, 15 April 1959, 130.09/2340/3.)
3. In March 1959, about 50 Jews who were attempting to immigrate to Israel were arrested, some in Tangier and others in Nador, adjoining the Spanish enclave of Melilla. (See the Israel embassy in Paris to the M.F.A., telegram 625, 30 March 1959; telegram 703, 16 April 1959, both in File 130.09/2349/2.)

516. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni[1] (Jerusalem). 24 April 1959

Coded Tel. 780; Inc.: 130.09/2297/12

Bendor sends a number of facts, comments, and suggestions for the deliberations to be held on immigration to Israel from Romania. The immigration had been stopped for reasons related to Soviet policy in the Middle East, and because of publicity in the press, and will be renewed only if Soviet considerations change. In the meantime, the Romanians act as though business is as usual, and allow immigration in small numbers. At the same time, they have isolated the legation from the Romanian Jews, subjected it to restrictions, detained a number of local employees, and are exerting pressure on Jews by means of arrests. Pressure brought by the Romanian government on the U.S.S.R. could speed up the Soviet decision to permit renewed immigration. This pressure can be achieved by a number of means: approaches by individuals or organizations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to Romanian representatives throughout the world; attempts to placate the Romanians and to help them save face; imposition of similar restraints on the Romanian legation in Israel. He suggests that such restraints should not be imposed until the outcome of the minister of foreign affairs' meeting with the Romanian minister in Israel is known.[6]

Notes

1. A copy was sent also to M. Carmil of Nativ.
2. In the Romanian decision to limit immigration; see No. 511.
3. Jews who had quit their jobs and handed in their passports to be stamped with a visa to Israel and were stuck in Romania with no possibility of immigrating to Israel.
4. Amnon Keren, a third secretary in the Israel legation, was declared *persona non grata* and expelled from Romania in March 1959.

5. The meeting took place on 8 May; see No. 521.
6. The conversation with Manu, the Romanian minister to Israel, took place on 16 April. The minister of foreign affairs asked about the continuation of family reunification and was particularly interested in the situation of those Jews who were stuck in Romania after making preparations for immigration. She stated that Israel had made an effort to influence newspaper coverage and avoid excessive publicity. Manu recorded what she said and promised to convey the content of their talk precisely to his superiors. (See East European Division to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 201, 16 April 1959, 130.09/2297/8.)

517. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Gazit (Jerusalem). 30 April 1959

Coded Tel. 768; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

Tsur reports on Easterman's conclusions following his visit to Morocco. He was received cordially by Ben Barka, Bouabid and Laghzoui, but with no results. They explained that this is a political matter, and that it is in the hands of M'hamedi (Moroccan minister of the interior) who is accompanying the prince on his visit to Egypt. In Easterman's opinion, the previous agreement for the immigration of 500 persons is no longer valid and cannot be revived. The advice of some well-informed Jews is that the only way is to bring influence to bear on the king through his son, but this is a delicate matter. The prince has recently met with Nasser; he needs his assistance and may even have received it. Furthermore, it will be difficult to find an intermediary who can talk to him. Even if the prince were to give an undertaking, it is doubtful that he will keep his word. It has therefore been agreed that the matter should be examined further and an effort made to find a way to reach the prince. He requests a reaction.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 515.
2. It is not known what is being referred to.
3. See No. 523.
4. One sentence had been omitted by the editors.
5. No reply to this telegram has been found.

518. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Bucharest. 6 May 1959

Coded Tel. 231; Outg.: 130.09/2297/9

Shimoni gives his reaction to the minister's proposals regarding the cessation of immigration to Israel from Romania.[1,2] Pressure by individuals will be brought to bear in all the Western capitals. In the meantime publicity in the press will be restricted. A column written by Eleanor Roosevelt will appear in the United States, as will a column in the American Yiddish press. In Israel individuals and delegations will appeal to the Romanian minister and letters will be sent to the press. Here too, as overseas, this will be controlled, ensuring that neither articles nor editorial reactions to these letters appear. As regards his suggestion to take placatory action, the intention is to carry out the activities overseas on a positive basis. As for his proposal to take reprisal action, there are no plans in this direction at the present, except for the examination of unaccompanied diplomatic baggage.

Notes

1. No. 516.
2. In this telegram (dated 30 April 1959, in File 130.09/2297/12), Bendor replied to Shimoni (telegram 224, 28 April 1959, 130.09/2297/8), in which he stated that Romanian immigrants in Israel wanted to permit publication of the suspension of immigration. Bendor suggested, in light of the fact that the struggle would be long and difficult and there was no indication of a softening of the Romanian position, to permit Romanian immigrants in Israel to express their concern and distress in the form of a newspaper article about those Jews who had remained in Romania with their bags packed for immigration, or in the form of an appeal by the Romanian immigrants to the Romanian legation in Israel.
3. No. 519.
4. Rabbi Portugal, imprisoned for alleged Zionist and immigration-related activities, was arrested in April 1959 and released about four months later.

519. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 6 May 1959

Coded Circular Tel. 645; Inc.: 130.09/2378/1

Shimoni sends instructions to Israel's representatives abroad concerning public activities connected to Romanian Jewry. It has been decided that it is

no longer possible to maintain complete silence and restraint on this matter. Although it is not yet desirable to permit publication in the press, they are requested to recruit a number of prominent personalities, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who will begin to meet with Romanian representatives in their countries of service. They should ask questions, express astonishment, and urge the continuation of the unification of families. Such personalities should have friendly connections with Romanians and have leftist leanings. Their arguments should be based mainly on humanitarian considerations and the positive approach to the unification of families that Romania began six months earlier, and express surprise at the stopping of the process in the middle. Shimoni requests reports of implementation.[1]

Note

1. See, for example, Herzog's report on his conversation with the Romanian minister in Washington. The latter replied evasively and said that with such a problem one must hope and be patient. (See the M.F.A. to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 270, 27 May 1959, 130.09/2297/9.)

520. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Budapest. 6 May 1959

Coded Tel. 142; Outg.: 130.09/2296/1

At a meeting with the minister of foreign affairs,[1] it was decided that Israel is prepared to renew negotiations on implementation of the agreement on immigration to Israel[2] on condition that the other side expresses its willingness to do so. Negotiations will have to begin from the basic premise of considerable numbers being permitted to emigrate. Discussions in this direction are being carried out through an intermediary in Israel who is in contact with the governor of the Bank of Hungary.[3] It was also decided that Israel would reciprocate if Hungary were to expel any Israelis. The above is solely for information, and developments are to be awaited.[4]

Notes

1. This consultation was held after Yaron reported that Szarka had told him that Hungary viewed the non-payment of the promised sum as a violation of the immigration accord and instructions had been issued to stop issuing passports to

immigration candidates. (See Yaron to the M.F.A., telegram 19, 30 April 1959, 130.09/2296/2.)

2. See No. 506.
3. It is not known who is being referred to.
4. For the continuation of the affair, see No. 534.

521. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem). 8 May 1959

Coded Tel. 805; Inc.: 130.09/2297/12

In a meeting with Bunaciu, he outlined the attitude of the government of Romania. There has been no change in policy regarding reunification of families. The rate of immigration to Israel is an internal matter for Romania and will not be influenced by external intervention. As regards the 14,500 unable to leave, concern about them is unwarranted. They are working and living well, and their emigration will be arranged in accordance with considerations of the Government of Romania. The local employees who have been arrested are accused of crimes against the state, and the legation has no right to intervene in this matter, even though the interest in their fate is understandable. He will endeavor to clarify the details about their trials. The restrictions imposed on members of the legation resulted from non-diplomatic activities carried out by them. Recently permits for two journeys have been granted and he is prepared to re-examine the matter. As regards relations in general, these should not be influenced by the issue of the unification of families. He referred to the criticism of the Israel government expressed in the Knesset and the Israeli press regarding this matter.[2]

Bendor states that there was nothing in this conversation on which to base expectations for a change in the situation, but in Romania anything can happen. He will cable more details about the meeting.

Notes

1. The city of Braov in Transylvania was called Stalin in 1950-1960.
2. The Knesset debated immigration from Romania on 11 March 1959. MK Landau (Herut) lambasted Ben-Gurion and Peres that their statements (see No. 508, n. 1) had caused grave harm to immigration from Romania. (See *Divrei ha-Knesset*, Fourth Session of the Third Knesset, Vol. XXVI, p. 1419.)
3. See No. 522

522. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) and M. Carmil (Vienna). 10 May 1959

Coded Tel. 813; Inc.: 130.09/2297/12

Bendor adds some comments on his meeting with Bunaciu. Despite the polite atmosphere, the tone of the conversation was assertive. He stated explicitly that Israel should not raise the matter of the unification of families again. The fact that, two hours after the meeting, forms for registration for immigration to Israel arrived at the legation is an indication that nominally the policy of unification of families remains valid. However, the pace is very slow, five left in April and up till now 19 had left in May. This is proof that unification of families is being carried out with Israel to the same degree as with other states. Bendor does not have high hopes of the promises regarding the detainees and the immigration of the local employees of the legation. Nor are there any indications of relaxing of restrictions on the movement of members of the legation.

523. M. Shneerson (Paris) to M. Gazit (Jerusalem). 13 June 1959

Coded Tel. 951; Inc.: 130.09/2349/2

Easterman has returned from Morocco empty-handed. He did not succeed in meeting with several persons whom he had intended to see, and in his conversation with Ben Barka learned that since their last meeting[1] he has changed his mind completely. He stated that because of the complex political situation there is no point in raising the issue of immigration to Israel now with any of the ministers. At a meeting with Ambassador Tsur in Paris, it was decided to arrange a meeting between Goldmann and the sultan during the latter's vacation in Switzerland.[2] In a conversation Shneerson had with Brady, the *New York Times* correspondent in Rabat, the latter suggested that he would write an article on the subject in his paper, but requested authoritative information. Requests directives prior to his meeting with Goldmann.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 517.
2. Gazit cabled that he and the Jewish Agency personnel viewed the proposal

favourably. He also suggested "a shower of letters from Jews to the sultan." (See Gazit to the Israel embassy in Paris, telegram 990, 14 June 1959, 130.09/2349/3.)

3. Gazit cabled, "why limited to the *Times* only? Please consider the entire publicity policy in this matter for the future" (ibid.).

524. M. Gazit (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 15 June 1959

Coded Tel. 998; Outg.: 130.09/2349/3

Following upon further consultations on the question of Morocco,[1] the following conclusions have been reached:

1) A long-term plan of action should be drawn up regarding relations with Morocco. This plan should be based on the following principles: continuation of independent immigration to Israel; continuation of current contacts through the World Jewish Congress, despite the disappointments and failures; bringing pressure to bear on the Moroccans through the press and public opinion.

2) Arranging a meeting between Goldmann and the king, and a meeting between Easterman and Crown Prince Hassan.[3]

3) Approaches to be made by French personalities, such as Faure,[4] during the king's visit to Paris.

In the meantime the situation in Tunis is disturbing.[5] At the meeting between Easterman and Bourguiba Jr., it should be pointed out that it is in the interest of the Tunisians to prevent the problem of immigration to Israel from their country reaching a situation like that in Morocco.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 523, nn. 2 and 2.
2. The campaign to create a favourable public climate in the West concerning the distress of the Jews in the Soviet Union, which had been underway since the mid fifties.
3. The father is King (Sultan) Muhammad V. Mullay Hassan was the crown prince, who in 1961 became King Hassan II. The meeting between Goldmann and the king did not take place.
4. The reference is probably to Edgar Faure, a senator since May 1959, formerly premier (February 1955-January 1956) and finance minister in May-June 1958. It is possible, however, that the reference is to Maurice Henri Faure, a member of the National Assembly, who was secretary of state for foreign affairs from January 1956

until June 1958 and special assistant to the foreign minister for Moroccan and Tunisian affairs from November 1956 until June 1957.

5. In this telegram (from Goldmann and Shragai to the Israel embassy in Paris, 15 June 1959, 130.09/49/3) the embassy was asked to tell Easterman that reports had arrived that the government of Tunisia was about to close the office of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency. The office was in fact shut down in 1960.
6. In the meeting between Easterman and the younger Bourguiba, who served as the Tunisian ambassador in Paris, on 20 May, that is, before the present telegram was sent, the latter said the that although there were no restrictions on individual immigration, Tunisia could not permit a foreign organization to operate to encourage Tunisian citizens to emigrate. (See the report, dated 1 June 1959, in File 93.04/335/12.) On 9 July 1959, Easterman met with the elder Bourguiba, who said he had not and would not interfere with Jews who wished to leave. (See Liveran to Gazit, telegram 83, 14 July 1959, 130.09/2322/7; the report on the meeting on 9 July is in File 93.04/335/12.)

525. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) and M. Carmil (Vienna). 13 August 1959

Coded Tel. 65; Inc.: 130.09/2297/12

As Bunaciu is away, he has met with Dumitrescu and told him about his meeting with the Israeli minister of foreign affairs during the conference of Israeli heads of mission in Eastern Europe that took place in Switzerland.[1] His report is a sad one dealing with the feeling of restraint on the movement of members of the legation, the arrest of legation employees,[2] and the departure of a very small number of immigrants within the framework of unification of families. The minister of foreign affairs has requested him to pass on verbally the following message to the Romanians:

1) An expression of hope that the Romanian government will speed up the examination of the many cases of separation of families.

2) A request for information about those arrested and a reminder that their relatives in Israel have requested that they be allowed to join them.

Dumitrescu replied that he will pass on the message to Bunaciu on his return, but he wished to relate to two points. Regarding the detained employees, he stressed that they are Romanian citizens and have been accused of breaking Romanian law. If they are found guilty they will be punished; if they are found not guilty, there will be no objection to their joining their families in Israel. The issue of the unification of families is also an internal Romanian matter, and the fact that solutions have been found in

a number of cases is proof that the humanitarian attitude of the Romanians has not changed.

In general, he stressed that the situation described by the minister is not so bleak and he requested that this be passed on to the Israeli minister of foreign affairs. He is not aware of the restrictions imposed on the legation. There has been progress in the area of cultural relations and they are prepared to examine further proposals in this field.

Notes

1. A conference of the heads of Israeli missions in Eastern Europe, held in Zurich in July 1959.
2. Between December 1958 and March 1959, six local employees of the legation were arrested—four Jews and two non-Jews. The two non-Jews were released after a short time but did not return to their jobs; see No. 528.

526. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni[1] (Jerusalem). 24 August 1959

Coded Tel. 93; Inc.: 130.09/2297/12

He has met with Bodnaraš, a member of the Politburo and deputy prime minister, responsible for security matters. He raised the matter of the local employees who have been arrested[2] and the slowing down of immigration to Israel. Bodnaraš undertook to examine the possibility of releasing the prisoners within the framework of the amnesty on the occasion of the Romanian national holiday. As regards immigration to Israel, he stated that the Romanian policy has not changed. At this time there is no possibility of stepping up the rate, and he blurted out: "The matter is not dependent upon us only" but corrected himself by saying "The matter also depends on us." He then added: "During the course of time it will be possible to add a zero to the two to three leaving now." (That means that twenty to thirty persons per day will be permitted to leave.)[7]

Notes

1. A copy was sent also to M. Carmil.
2. See No. 525, and n. 2 there.
3. See No. 521.

4. On 2 June 1959, the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee approved a regulation imposing censorship on reports on immigration from countries that placed restrictions on immigration (see Shimoni to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 288, 3 June 1959, 130.09/2297/9.)
5. Khrushchev and Eisenhower met at Camp David on 17 September 1959. At this meeting Khrushchev withdrew his demand that the Western powers withdraw their forces from Berlin.
6. The reference is to an affair involving a local female employee of the legation; see No. 499.
7. Shimoni replied to this telegram that the content of the talk was "perhaps an encouraging ray of light" and recommended fostering the connection with Bodnaraš. (See Shimoni to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 389, 26 August 1959, 130.09/2297/9.)

527. M. Gazit (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 27 September 1959

Coded Tel. W578; Outg.: 130.09/2333/18

Gazit addresses his telegram to Mrs. Meir[1] and states that he has just received a report that Morocco has announced the cessation of postal and telegraph connections with Israel and a bag of airmail has already been returned. This is in addition to other steps that have already been taken such as the closing of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrants Aid Society, the plans to close down the Alliance education system, and the ban on wearing blue and white skull caps or those with the word "Israel" embroidered on them. All this requires the intervention of the World Jewish Congress, even though the recent actions of this organization have been irresolute. He asks that a meeting be held with Goldmann with the request that he urge the Congress to take steps in this matter.[2]

Notes

1. At the time Meir was in New York for the 14th session of United Nations General Assembly.
2. No report on a meeting between Meir and Goldmann has been found and evidently it never took place. Harman met with Goldmann and they agreed on a number of actions (see Harman and Arad to the Foreign M.F.A., telegram NWT 760, 6 October 1959, 130.09/2339/14). These activities, and others by other agents, proved fruitless. In the end, the problem of postal links between Israel and Morocco was solved by sending mail through a third country using the services of the Mossad. (See Isser Harel, *Security and Democracy* [Hebrew], pp. 312-313.)

528. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem). 30 September 1959

Coded Tel. 199; Inc.: 130.09/2297/13

Suggests that in the light of contradictory reports on the arrest of local employees,[1] the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issue an official statement clarifying the facts as follows: between December 1958 and March 1959 six local employees of the legation were arrested. Two of them, non-Jews, were released after a short time, but did not return to work. The remainder, a man and three women, have not been released. These detainees have relatives in Israel or had requested to immigrate to Israel. Repeated requests by the legation to liberate the detainees has not been successful.[3]

Notes

1. In this telegram (Shimoni to the Israel minister in Bucharest, telegram 433, 24 September 1959, 130.09/2297/9) he wrote that a report from Paris had been published in the Israeli press that included several inaccuracies about the arrest of the local employees. Accordingly it had been decided that the spokesman of the M.F.A., in response to questions by journalists, would confirm the true particulars and correct what required correction.
2. Not found.
3. Shimoni replied that Bendor's suggestion had been accepted and a statement would be issued as he proposed. He added that the Israeli press had recently published many reactions and editorials about the affair. (See Shimoni to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 438, 1 December 1959, 130.09/2297/9.)

529. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) and M. Carmil (Vienna). 6 October 1959

Coded Tel. 230; Inc.: 130.09/2297/13

Dumitrescu had invited him to a meeting him to discuss the campaign in the Israeli press on the matter of the detainees.[1] He said that this campaign will not be beneficial to relations between the two countries. Such pressure will not bring a solution to the problems affecting their relations, nor will it help to bring about a change in the matter of the unification of families. Bendor replied that he was disappointed at the subject of the meeting. In fact, he had hoped that he was being invited to receive a reply to the message from the

Israeli minister of foreign affairs[3] or to the questions he had raised with Dumitrescu and his colleagues during the past months. The aim of the press campaign is to establish the true facts, and it does not constitute an attack on the government of Romania. The best way to put an end to the campaign is to solve the outstanding issues. Dumitrescu replied that he is still convinced that the situation existing between the two countries is not as grave as Bendor describes it and he does not wish to go into all the matters that were raised at their previous meeting. He stated that he would bring the minister's statement to the knowledge of his government and expressed the hope that they would meet to discuss more pleasant matters.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 528 and n. 3 there.
2. In a conversation on 1 October; for a report, see Bendor to the M.F.A., telegrams 206 and 207, 1 October 1959, 130.09/2297/13.
3. See No. 525.
4. See No. 511.
5. See No. 525.
6. In a further telegram about the meeting, Bendor said that if the campaign in the Israeli press had been completed there was no point in renewing it; but if it was still in progress, neither was there any point to interrupting it. What should be prevented was partisan rivalry at the expense of the Jews of Romania. In addition a campaign should be begun in United States. (See Bendor to Shimoni, telegram 231, 7 October 1959, 130.09/2297/13.)

530. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) and M. Carmil (Vienna). 18 October 1959

Coded Tel. 273; Inc.: 130.09/2297/13

He has met with Malnaan, deputy foreign minister for East European affairs, and apparently the most important of the deputy foreign ministers.[1] The subject was the campaign against Romania in the Israeli and international press and the attack on the car of the Romanian legation in Israel.[4] During the course of the conversation, the deputy minister repeated frequently the following two sentences: no good will come of this campaign, but rather the opposite. Israel should consider this campaign and put an end to it. He specifically threatened "the deterioration of relations or their severance." The reunion of families was also discussed.

Bendor's impression is that the publicity campaign has proved that the Romanian government is sensitive to public opinion. While there is no certainty that the present press campaign will bring about the resumption of immigration to Israel or the release of the detainees, there is the possibility that it will prevent further arrests and trials. The cessation of the campaign would mean submission to and acceptance of the whims of the Government of Romania. Bendor is convinced that the threat to sever relations is not serious. It would be difficult to sever relations in an atmosphere of international conciliation and Romania is interested in strengthening its economic ties with the West. Furthermore, severance would only exacerbate the Israeli reaction. His conclusion is that the threat is aimed at putting an end to the publicity campaign. On the other hand, the warning should not be taken lightly, and the Romanians may recall their minister, expel one of the legation, or even sever relations.

Bendor's proposals: to continue the campaign against Romania, but to transfer the main focus overseas, and to conduct it in a controlled and intelligent manner. The role of Israeli institutions and persons behind the campaign, especially the immigrants from Romania, must not be evident. In Israel, letters to editors of newspapers should continue to be sent, cases of separation of families should be publicized, and delegations sent to the Romanian minister. The minister of foreign affairs should summon the Romanian minister and put pressure on him regarding the unification of families and the arrest of legation employees. As regards the legation's car—if the Romanian complaint is legitimate then an official apology should be made.[6]

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 16 October. During the meeting he referred to the campaign in the Israeli press on behalf of those arrested and said that "if the objective of those organizing the campaign is to cause a deterioration in the relations between the two countries or their severance—that is not impossible." He recounted an incident in which the car of the Romanian legation had been attacked by armed men. He demanded that those responsible be punished and that steps be taken to guarantee the safety of legation staff. (See Bendor to Shimoni and Carmil, telegram 270, 16 October 1959, 130.09/2297/13.)
2. See No. 529.
3. See No. 528.
4. The reference is evidently to an incident in which the car of the Romanian legation was attacked; see n. 1 above.
5. The meeting took place on 19 October. Bendor conveyed Israel's desire to increase its purchases in Romania. The minister spoke in generalities about the influence of general relations on commercial relations. (See Bendor to the M.F.A., telegram 283, 20 October 1959, 130.09/2297/13.)

6. Shimoni replied that it had been agreed to accept most of Bendor's recommendations, that is, continuation of the information activity, especially abroad. (See Shimoni to the Israel legation in Bucharest, telegram 486, 23 October 1959, 130.09/2297/9.) On the meeting between Foreign Minister Meir and the Romanian minister, see No. 531.

531. Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Bucharest. 29 October 1959

Coded Tel. 499; Outg.: 130.09/2297/9

The minister of foreign affairs has met with the Romanian minister in Israel, Manu, and they had a long conversation. The subject was the renewal of unification of families. Manu said that he hopes that the process will be renewed and even increased and he will pass on the foreign minister's assertions. However, he requested a personal explanation as to why, if Israel considers emigration as being a humanitarian matter, the prime minister and Shimon Peres have issued political statements.[1] He was given an explanation that was partly a denial and partly an admission that mistakes have been made on this matter. The foreign minister also referred to the arrests.[2] Manu replied with the usual arguments, but said he will pass on the matter to his government. From time to time he noted specific cases that had been brought up.

Notes

1. See No. 511, n. 1.
2. See Nos. 499 and 528.

532. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) and M. Carmil (Vienna). 8 November 1959

Coded Tel. 352; Inc.: 130.09/2297/13

In a conversation with Bodnaraš held unofficially (at a Russian reception), the latter stated that following deliberations the Romanians have decided to renew the unification of families. This will not be mass emigration, but will be at an "acceptable" (he used the French word) rate and will be strictly for

unification of families. Also the detainees will be released. He stressed that this should not be made public. The rate of emigration will be several hundred per month. He reiterated that publicity should be prevented.

In Bendor's opinion the decision came after internal deliberations among the Romanians and apparently they were impressed by the minister of foreign affairs' conversation with the Romanian minister in Israel.[3] On the other hand, there is no doubt that the press campaign in Israel and the pressure in the United States have had their effect. He suggests not to reduce the pressure until practical results are evident.

Notes

1. See No. 526.
2. MK Idov Cohen of the Progressive Party was active in the public struggle on behalf of Romanian Jews and expressed himself vociferously against the regime there.
3. See No. 531.
4. "Shut up, boy!" in Yiddish.

533. Resumé of a Meeting (Jerusalem, 4 November 1959; document dated 9 November 1959)

93.04/335/13

The meeting was devoted to the subject of immigration to Israel from Morocco. Participants included staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by the minister, Jewish Agency officials, and representatives of the Israeli security services.

Goldmann opened the meeting by stating that because of the current unstable situation in Morocco no public activities should be carried out there, except for those that are inconspicuous and diplomatic. Consultations have been held in New York with all the Jewish welfare organizations functioning in Morocco and that was the conclusion reached. Consultations have also been held in Paris and it has been decided to involve various persons, some of whom would visit Morocco.

Chlomo Havilio, gave a resumé of activities carried out in Morocco since 1956. Up to mid-1956, the Jewish Agency was active there. After that, its activities were stopped, but immigration to Israel continued with the aid of Jewish organizations and the welfare organizations, too, continued to function. But a change has come about that has forced these organizations,

including HIAS, to cease functioning. The struggle is no longer for immigration to Israel, but for the very existence of the Jewish community as a minority. The result has been an increased flow of immigration. His recommendation is to expand the activities being carried out within Morocco and to increase publicity outside Morocco.

Shragai analyzed the motivations of the Moroccans. Their aim is to isolate the Jews in Morocco from World Jewry and to destroy the existing community structure. The latest events have destroyed the few remaining illusions of the Moroccan Jews and shown them that they need to organize themselves. The reaction of the Moroccan government was to cut off postal connections with Israel.[2]

Isser Harel stated that the process of Moroccan liberation has no place for a Jewish minority. Morocco's joining the Arab League accelerated this process. The solution is expansion of immigration with all the means available. He proposed that a publicity campaign and pressure on public opinion be mounted on a global scale, at the same time as carrying out illegal immigration to Israel. The publicity campaign should be focused on this immigration, especially the unavoidable mishaps that will eventuate during the course of immigration. However, lack of finance may be a major obstacle.

Goldmann expressed his doubts as to Isser Harel's proposal. Even if the finances are forthcoming, the Moroccans might increase their preventive actions. He also doubts the advisability of a publicity campaign. The Moroccans will find answers to all Israel's claims. There is also the danger that the Jews of Morocco may be forced by the Moroccan government to deny Israel's claims. He believes that quiet diplomatic activities cannot be carried out at the same time as a publicity campaign. These two activities are at cross-purposes.

Golda Meir summed up by saying that in the meantime material for a publicity campaign should be prepared and journalists briefed. She is ready to hold a meeting with those present together with representatives of the United Israel Appeal and the Joint Distribution Committee when they come to Israel.

Notes

1. For a report on the meeting, see Arad to the M.F.A., telegram NWT761, 5 October 1959, 130.09/2339/14.
2. See No. 527.
3. A self-defence organization established in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. This organization also assumed responsibility for illegal immigration from Morocco. (See Isser Harel, *Security and Democracy* [Hebrew], pp. 303-304 and 306-307.)

4. No report on such a meeting has been found and is not clear whether it in fact took place.

534. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Budapest. 13 November 1959

Coded Tel. 210; Outg.: 130.09/2296/1

Meir informs Yaron of the decision to the make payment of a quarter of a million dollars. A member of Nativ will come to Budapest especially for this purpose and thus it will be stressed that it is not the Israel government that is paying. He should join him for the meeting at the Foreign Ministry. At this meeting an attempt must be made to exact from the Hungarians some sort of promise as regards the future.[3,4]

Notes

1. Meir met in New York with her Hungarian counterpart, Andre Sik, when they were attending the 14th session of United Nations General Assembly. No report on the meeting has been found.
2. Yaron reported that agreement had been reached at the meeting for the "immediate" payment of a quarter of a million dollars, with the rest in quarterly instalments. The Hungarians promised to renew issuing exit permits as soon as the first payment was received. (See Yaron to Meir, telegram 116, 23 December 1959, 130.09/2296/2.)
3. Israel's hopes that the renewal of payments would pave the way for significant immigration were quickly dashed. The Hungarians claimed that Israel must show patience, taking account of their own difficulties in establishing a special policy for emigration to Israel. (See the survey by the Israel legation in Budapest, 21 February 1960, 130.23/3313/4.)

535. Sh. Bendor (Bucharest) to Y. Shimoni (Jerusalem) and M. Carmil (Vienna). 9 December 1959

Coded Tel. 469; Outg.: 130.09/2297/3

Met with Dumitrescu at his request on the 9th.[1] The conversation dealt with the renewal of unification of families and the detainees. Dumitrescu said that the local employees have been found guilty of crimes against the state

but he is not aware of the sentence. They will be able to reunite with their families after they have served their sentences.

As regards immigration to Israel, he stated that the rate depends on administrative possibilities, and priorities will be determined by practical considerations. He agreed that a list of specific cases of separation of husband and wife be submitted so that he could speed up the process. As for publicity about the unification of families, they do not have any special policy on this matter. It is not the publication of the number of persons emigrating that led to the crisis, but the interpretation given to it in Israel. Bendor was surprised that he was aware of the demonstration outside the legation in Tel Aviv, which, according to what was stated there, would be followed by further demonstrations. He doubts whether the demonstrators are from among the separated families. Such demonstrations would not improve relations. He attributes the difficulties to the unfavourable atmosphere that has arisen from the campaign against the Romanian government. The reduction in tension has brought changes for the better, as Bendor pointed out.[3]

Notes

1. The meeting was held at Bendor's initiative; he wanted to clarify the status of the local employees who had been arrested, indicate satisfaction at the accelerated treatment of family reunification requests after the meeting between Meir and Manu (see No. 531), express Israel's gratitude for the removal of the siege of the legation and the extension of the commercial agreement, and discuss the issue of publicity about the renewal of family reunification. (See Bendor to Shimoni, telegram 417, 25 November 1959, 130.09/2297/13.)
2. Itzhak Korn, Mapai member of Knesset, chairman of the Association of Romanian Immigrants in Israel.
3. Bendor defined the talk as "moderate"; despite the warnings about the campaign against Romania and the allegations about the demonstration, no threats were voiced. (See Bendor to Shimoni and Carmil, Telegram 470, 10 December 1959, 130.09/2297/13.)

536. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Bucharest. 31 December 1959

Coded Tel. 615; Outg.: 130.09/2297/9

The Division informs the minister that the Israel minister in Hungary has reported that Jews from Transylvania arriving at the legation in Budapest

have stated that the militia in provincial towns of Romania had pressured them to submit requests for emigration to countries other than Israel. During the past month some fifty such requests have been submitted in the town of Braşov, but have not yet been approved. Recently in Timişoara, fifty passports were issued, only seven of which were for Israel. Confusion prevails, people are afraid that a trap has been set and he asks whether this should be encouraged or the Jews should be warned against complications.[1]

Note

1. For further developments in the affair, see Vol. 14, chapter 23.

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Abbreviations:
I.D.F. — Israel Defence Forces
n — note

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